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MAGAZINE

APRIL, 1970

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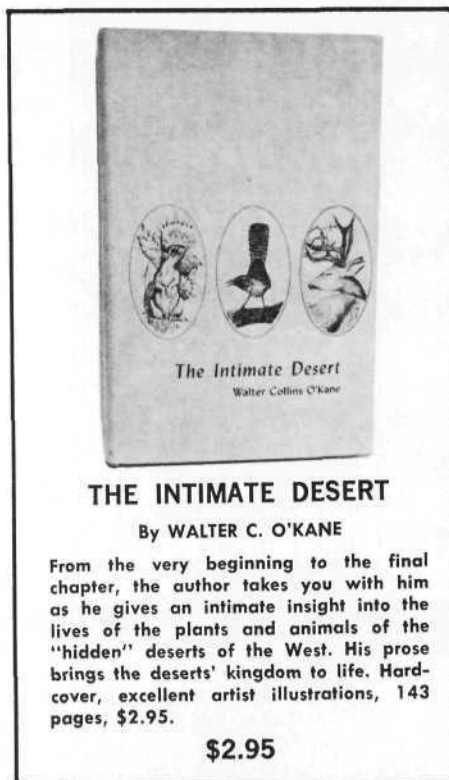
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#### THE COVER:

An abandoned 2-stamp mill near the north end of Kelso Valley in California's Kern County. Kelso Valley is off State 14 north of Mojave. Photo by Sam Petty, Pasadena, Calif. E-3 Ektachrome. Speed Graphic 4x5, 135mm Symmar lens, spring morning.

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## A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

SIX MONTHS ago few people had heard of the word "ecology." Today it ranks with Vietnam in political and social importance and seems to be the one subject about which there is not a generation gap. Simply defined, ecology means "the study of human population in terms of physical environment and cultural characteristics."

The provocative article by Al Pearce on Page 16 is about the ecology of our desert areas. A long-time contributor to DESERT Magazine, Al Pearce has

been "covering" the back country of the West for 15 years, both as outdoor editor of the Upland (Calif.) Daily Report and as a free-lance writer. He is a member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America.

Al is also executive director of the recently formed Academy of Man, a non-profit organization to "assist Nature in her effort to live with man and to promote understanding and knowledge to make it possible for man to live with Nature."

DESERT Magazine, like the author, does not completely endorse the Bureau of Land Management report. We, too, are against regimentation and blanket restrictions. But, as the author points out, unless there are some controls established we are inviting chaos and possible destruction of many of our natural heritages. This is *your* DESERT Magazine — and *your* desert — and we solicit your comments and ideas on how we can work together to bring order out of chaos.

Speaking of balance we strive to bring our readers a balanced magazine, with something of interest for all and not overly burdened with advertising. This policy requires the fullest support for the advertisers that do appear on our pages. In this respect, with so many of you saving and preserving your books, you are reluctant to cut out the coupons in ads such as the Coot Industries display on our back cover. In corresponding with advertisers of this type please be sure to copy any key numbers or directly mention DESERT. In this manner the advertiser can tell if a certain publication "draws" sufficiently to warrant continued advertising. If and when the advertising volume increases we will bring you a bigger book and more color.

It had to happen. Computerization has finally entered into the recreation field. The tremendous popularity of "getting away to it all" has placed such a demand on state-operated parks that a computer has been implemented to accommodate the vast numbers of reservations. Under the system, campsites at state parks may be reserved through December 22, 1970 at a Computicket outlet, or through the Department of Parks and Recreation, P.O. Box 2390, Sacramento 95811. The parks themselves no longer accept reservation requests. This will end forever the unforgettable experience of driving for hours, with the children getting more anxious by the minute and arriving at the campgrounds to be greeted with the "No Vacancy" sign. Just about this time the little woman gives a look that defies description. So-o-o, perhaps progress does have some advantages and technology has come to the assistance of the all-knowing head of the house who assures one and all: "Don't worry, we won't need to make reservations this time of the year!"

*William H. Hays*



# Rambling on Rocks

by Glenn and Martha Vargas

**T**HE DESERTS of the world are known for their gem deposits. Although most of these gems also are in non-desert regions as well, a few of them are to be found almost exclusively in desert areas. Probably the most important truly desert gem is turquoise. It is found in a number of locations in our own southwest deserts. There also is an important foreign deposit in Persia.

Chemically, turquoise is a copper aluminum phosphate. The phosphates are a group of minerals that produce a number of gems. Variscite, closely resembling turquoise, is another gem material found almost exclusively in desert regions, and also is a phosphate. Turquoise has a hardness of from 5 to 6 on Moh's scale of hardness, and thus is slightly softer than glass. The finest material will always exhibit this hardness, but as most turquoise is somewhat porous, that with extreme porosity will appear to be much softer. Actually, turquoise is also quite tough and is all about the same hardness, but the porous material has lost some of its toughness, and just appears softer.

The color of the best material is a clean blue, often referred to as "robin's egg blue." The color grades away from this into an undesirable green, and finally to an almost chalk-white. The finest of all is called spider-web from the network of fine black lines throughout the material. If the stone is a nice deep blue with these black lines, the contrast is very striking, and it is very valuable.

For many years it was thought that this mineral never produced visible crystals. This idea was shattered a few years ago with the discovery of exceedingly brilliant blue turquoise crystals near Lynch Station, in Campbell County, Vir-

ginia. It is very interesting that the world's only known deposit of crystals of this mineral is in a non-desert region. There are a few other locations out of the deserts where turquoise is found, but none of them produce gem material of any value.

The fact that turquoise is porous and also soluble in acids makes it a mineral of dry regions. Most soil water is acid, and when it comes in contact with a porous material it is quickly absorbed, with the acid then able to attack the mineral from within as well as on the surface. The infrequent watering of our deserts helps to preserve turquoise. The crystals found in Virginia are not porous.

The formation of turquoise, however, was carried out under moist to wet conditions. The copper and aluminum were the result of decomposition of various minerals probably by late volcanic action. These two metals were concentrated in veins along with phosphoric acid. The phosphoric acid could have been derived from one of two sources. The most ready source could have been from a parallel decomposition of the mineral apatite, which is high in phosphorous. The other, and at first a somewhat surprising source, is from the remains of certain plants and animals. Even though the combining of these constituents into turquoise took place in a more or less wet situation, the mineral could not have remained in its natural state if it had been held under wet conditions, especially if the solutions were acid.

Some of the mines producing turquoise have no other minerals of any value, with all operations geared exclusively to the recovery of the gem material. On the other hand, many of the copper mines in Arizona produce small amounts of good turquoise in the upper mining levels. As the material is valuable, it is necessary for the operators to carry on more than one mining operation. At times this may be a nuisance, but the monetary realization more than makes up for it.

The presence of turquoise in copper mines is not surprising. As the copper was plentiful, all that was needed was for the aluminum and phosphorous to be brought in contact with it. Aluminum is a very common metal, and was undoubtedly present with the copper. In most mines, the materials appear to have

been concentrated in two ways. Many small cracks filled with the forming concentrates, and this vein type is the most common occurrence. In other cases, various irregular openings would fill with lumps of the mineral. These lumps are known as nuggets and are highly prized. The tendency for turquoise to form nuggets is quite pronounced, and in certain circumstances clusters of nuggets would form. If these were cemented together with some dark mineral, the coveted spider-web would result.

The finest turquoise, from either Persia or our southwest, is sold by the carat; a method of pricing usually reserved for the clear gems. Prices may run in the vicinity of \$1.00 per carat in some instances. Prices on the open market (to the amateur gem cutter), are variable depending upon quality, but the better grades are usually a number of dollars per ounce. The better grades on the open market are seldom the most choice material. This most choice material, almost without exception, goes directly from the mine to the professional cutter.

Much of the turquoise on the market in the form of jewelry is of the poorer grades that have been treated to enhance the color. The older, highly unsatisfactory method was to soak the light colored stone in oil. The oil, depending upon type, would either become rancid or alter chemically in time and the color of the gem would revert to a displeasing green. A later and more satisfactory method was to place the raw or cut stone in boiling paraffin which would readily penetrate the porous material. Gems so treated would on occasion also change color. Modern methods now infiltrate with some of the plastic resins. Plastic treated gems take on a very pleasing deep color, and their durability is actually enhanced. Treated gems, however, have not been popular with discriminating buyers.

Today's market enjoys a brisk popularity for turquoise. Indian jewelry and imitations are popular. Rockhounds find the stone easily available in the rough, even though high priced. Cutting and polishing excellent stones is easy on our modern equipment, and it is a gem easily fitted into jewelry of either conventional or modern design. Like the deserts of the southwest, the desert's own gem is enjoying an ever-increasing popularity. □

# Book Reviews

by Jack Pepper

## SAN DIEGO

### LAND OF THE SUNDOWN SEA

By Rex Brandt

Although only one of California's 58 counties, San Diego contains within its 4255 square miles all of the geographical contrasts and urban and provincial moods of its mother state.

There are coastal and inland mountains, vast deserts, lakes, streams, cities, villages, Indian reservations and the Pacific coast and harbors—all reflecting the dramatic history of the people.

From September 28, 1542 when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sailed into the harbor of San Diego and called it San Miguel Bay in honor of Saint Michael, to

the present scientific age of jets and atoms, San Diego has played an important role in the settlement of the West.

Artist Rex Brandt was born and raised in Southern California and from boyhood has absorbed its moods and color and then reflected his impressions in oils, watercolors and sketches. His imaginary dialogue augments his impressions.

I felt I was sitting with the artist as he not only painted, but talked to his objects and subjects. This is Rex Brandt's *San Diego, Land of the Sundown Sea*—a subtle montage of California's historic past and vibrant future. Large, 9 x 12 format, quality paper, hardcover, \$12.50.

## MAP OF THE MOJAVE DESERT

Compiled by Wes Chambers

Using a topographic map as a basic underlay, Wes Chambers has created an unusual back-country map of the Mojave Desert area. His novel approach to cartography makes the map excellent for planning trips and for overall exploring in this region of Southern California.

Chambers spent two years researching points of historical interest which he has pinpointed on the map. Included are military sites, ghost towns and mining camps, historic trails and routes, old railroads, Indian sites and petroglyphs, outstanding geological features, scenic areas, and exceptional areas for exploration, which are outlined in green.

Although the area covered is too large to show every back country trail, he does have the main trails and suggests obtaining USGS 15 minute maps for detailed areas.

I showed the map to several back country veterans, all of whom said they thought it accurate in every detail. They all bought one, so that should be proof. Map measures 22 x 36 inches. \$3.00.

## LOS HERMANOS PENITENTES

By Lorayne Ann Horka-Follick, Ph.D.

The Penitentes are a group of Spanish laymen who have used flagellation as a means of expiating their sins. Although their heyday of religious and political activity was from 1850 to 1899, their silent brotherhood to this day remains an active force and is the great mystery of New Mexico.

Isolated in the mountains during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these Spanish colonials lived a secluded life, preserving their music, art, folklore and customs until "invaded" by modern civilization.

As the author describes their personality and religious inheritance — Spanish-American in word, thought and deed—it becomes easier to judge these mysterious flagellants within their own context, rather than through the modern code of conduct "because they are not in any way part of it."

Well researched, exciting and easily read. Hardcover, illustrated with graphic and historic photographs, 226 pages, \$7.50.

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# Historic Palm Spring

by Richard A. Bloomquist



**S**OUTH OF Agua Caliente in San Diego County, on State Route 2, a long, thin line of mesquite is visible a short distance off to the east at the edge of the Carrizo Badlands. Near the center of this narrow strip of green, are three palm trees with a spring of cool water at their feet. This is Palm Spring, a once-vital oasis now bypassed by the main routes of travel.

A highway sign along S2, five miles below Agua Caliente, points the way to the waterhole, which lies a little over one and one-half miles from the pavement in Southern California's Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Although when the sand is firm a passenger car can make it to the spring, it is recommended the trip be made in back country vehicles.

Today's traveler comes to Palm Spring for its beauty, serenity, and historic interest, but in the past the life-giving water of the oasis was its greatest attraction. A monument in front of the palms tells of the waterhole's heritage:

"Here was a palm-studded desert resting place, 1826-1866, for Mexican pioneers, mountain men, the Army of the West, Mormon Battalion, boundary commission, Forty-niners, railway survey, Butterfield Overland Mail stages, and

**Palm Springs, California is known for its golf courses, celebrities and as a retreat for presidents of all parties. Less than 50 miles away in the Anza-Borrego Desert, Palm Spring, California is a serene and historical oasis—a retreat for those getting away from all parties.**

California Legion. It was the site of the Butterfield Stage station built in 1858 by Warren F. Hall."

The history could have begun even earlier with the Diegueno Indians and the first Spanish explorers of this desert region. Don Pedro Fages probably passed within a short distance of the spring in 1772 while trailing deserters from the Presidio of San Diego. He, and the deserters, thus became the first white men of historical record to enter the Anza-Borrego country. Lieutenant Colonel Fages also skirted the oasis in April 1782, and again in the fall of that year when he returned from the Colorado River as Governor of California.

The waterhole's past is a chronicle of southwest history, for it lay along one of the great overland routes into California, a route which eventually became known as the Southern Emigrant Trail. Over

this track came Kit Carson, General Kearny, and the Army of the West during the Mexican War (1846), the Mormon Battalion (1847), which opened the first wagon road into Southern California; miners, settlers, and herds of cattle and sheep during the California Gold Rush; the stages of the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line (1857-1861) and of the Butterfield Overland Mail (1858-1861). The San Antonio and San Diego Line was the first to carry both passengers and mail across the continent. However, the Civil War ended its career as well as that of the rival Butterfield Line, and the increased use of other routes in the years following the war was still another blow to the fortunes of the Southern Emigrant Trail.

Much of Palm Spring's lure derives from its setting along an unspoiled sector of the old trail. Through most of California's desert country the historic and scenic values of this legendary road have been diluted by settlements and paved highways or made inaccessible by the abandoned but still hazardous Carrizo Impact Area. Yet, on both sides of Palm Spring the trail is virtually untouched by the Twentieth Century. For roughly 12 miles—from a point about three miles





northwest of the spring to the site of the Carrizo Stage Station, some nine miles to the southeast—hikers, horsemen, and four-wheelers can follow the approximate route of the Southern Emigrant-Butterfield Overland Trails along Vallecito and Carrizo washes.

There was once a Butterfield station at Palm Spring, where fresh animals were kept to relieve those pulling the coaches. The next stop for stages traveling north was Vallecito ("Little Valley"), 10 miles distant. This restored station — now a San Diego County park—is the only one still standing in the Anza-Borrego Desert.

The record of its past and its natural beauty account for the appeal of Palm Spring today. Immediately to the east lies the wilderness of the Carrizo Badlands. To the west rise the Laguna and Tierra Blanca mountains, while to the southwest Sombrero Peak dominates the skyline. Around the waterhole itself vegetation is relatively lush. Three fan palms, some 20 feet tall, stand side by side behind the pool, and mesquite, much of it laden with mistletoe, is abundant.

The waterhole is a prime site for bird

watching, especially in the spring when migratory species pass this way. Even during my autumn visit dozens of brilliant western bluebirds were perched in the mesquites, with as many as a score drinking from the pool at the same time. House finches added their song to the air, while occasional Phainopepla — a black bird with white wing patches and a sharp crest—provided counterpoint with his call. In the distance a red-tailed hawk landed in the highest branches of a large mesquite.

Larger forms of wildlife frequent the oasis, too, and the soft sands reveal the tracks of mammals along with those of birds, insects and reptiles.

Desert waterholes, especially those with Washingtonia palms, have a fascination about them, and Palm Spring lives up to the tradition. Cool water, all the more important for its scarcity; lush, aromatic vegetation; shade and the rustle of wind through the palm fronds; the singing of birds—all these things, together with a rich past and a pure setting, have made Palm Spring a serene and inviting oasis along the abandoned Emigrant Trail. □

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CANADIAN PATENT NO. 837-543

**W**EBSTER DEFINES "cantil" as a Mexican moccasin snake. Some experts say it means a small spring in a rock cliff depression. But most Fremont Valley old-timers pinpoint it more accurately: Cantil is one of the most colorful outposts of the Mojave Desert in Southern California.

Twenty miles north of the town of Mojave, and two miles to the east off State Route 14, Cantil nestles near the approach to Red Rock Canyon State Park. Its peaceful sagebrush-covered expanse, now dotted with numerous small permanent and weekend dwellings, has been a town since 1914—the sign on the post office testifies to that. The long-time postmaster, Martin Engel, has lived in and around Cantil since 1927, and is considered an authority on local history.

He is also an expert assayer, and is kept busy testing and recording not only the ore samples brought in by local prospectors, but those sent to him from all corners of the globe. (See "Golden Trails of an Old Time Assayer," *Desert*, 1961.)

From the highway, Cantil is easily spotted because of its oasis-like stand of green trees and acres of alfalfa. Alfalfa is the major crop right now, mainly because of the huge Mandeburo Ranch, but it is by no means the only one—barley and milo maize flourish here, and from time to time considerable acreage is planted to cotton. It naturally follows that a lively side crop is rabbits!

"Industry" is a word not usually associated with desert living, but in addition to Mandeburo and another ranch almost as large, Cantil supports the White Rock Clay Mines, which ship clay year-round, and two major salt companies. Saltdale, a salt operation located on the edge of a lake, is a prominent landmark.

Ross Rogers easily captures the trophy for number of years' residence in tiny Cantil—he has had a home and ranch there since 1919. In terms of age, Cinco Bill at 84 is the current winner. And among the desert's best known personalities is the famed aviatrix of former years, Pancho Barnes, until recently the operator of a Cantil ranch and general store and now a resident of nearby Boron.

Mrs. Verlie Donley is the perfect example of a self-reliant, pioneer desert dweller. This indomitable woman bought her isolated little house many years ago

# CONTENTED



*Martin Engel (upper left) is Cantil's long-time postmaster and expert assayer. One of the many miner's caves (upper right) in Last Chance Canyon. Mrs. Verlie Donley, self-reliant pioneer, still cuts a man's work.*



# IN CANTIL

by Barbara and Warren Transue



LIKE MANY OTHER  
PICTURESQUE AND  
HISTORIC DESERT  
COMMUNITIES,  
CANTIL IS BEING  
"DISCOVERED" BY  
URBAN REFUGEES.

from a popular "businesswoman" of the area whose somewhat offbeat enterprises had been marked by the presence of lovely girls and by a thriving still.

Mrs. Donley's husband immediately set to improving the property, and when the time came when she was alone, she herself did extensive stone work on the place, meanwhile raising a family of energetic children. At Cantil she has proven her capabilities by doing maintenance work at the local school, working for a spell on the road gang, and doing all her own mechanical work, automotive and household. In her 70s, Verlie Donley can still cut a man's work, and she's proud of it!

Little Cantil has at least one claim to fame: it is the site of historical Desert Spring, where in 1850 the remnants of the Manly-Jayhawk party, staggering out of Last Chance Canyon after months of suffering in Death Valley. The spring was on the old Indian Horsethief Trail, and is now a State Registered Landmark. Surrounded only by Athel tree skeletons and the vastness of the lonely desert, the stone monument now marks just a memory—the spring dried up a few years ago,

probably because of extensive irrigating in the valley.

Although Cantil has a number of permanent residents—some employed at the ranches and mines, others on county road crews, still others at nearby Edwards Air Force Base—many of the tiny homes occupying the centers of five or ten-acre plots are the weekend hideaways of city dwellers who just crave the quiet of the desert.

One such house belongs to Mallese Black. It is a neat adobe brick structure with tile roof, and is complete with utilities. Miss Black finds the adobe construction excellent insulation, and even on the hottest summer day her little cottage is a cool retreat. Several of her neighbors have gone in for similar type dwellings down there on what the natives call "The Jackrabbits."

The desert around Cantil abounds in fascinating side trips. One of the favorite camping and rockhounding spots of desert buffs is Last Chance Canyon, passable only for sturdy vehicles most of the time and sometimes not passable at all. Several miles into the canyon explorers come upon a series of caves which were

occupied briefly around the turn of the century by miners. The ghosts of once-flourishing mining enterprises are all around, and there are even some small outfits still operating.

The nicest feature of Last Chance Canyon is the magnificent panorama of pastel colors it offers—like test dabs on an artist's palette. If you're one of those who think the colors in desert paintings are exaggerated, pay a visit to Last Chance Canyon and be convinced! (See *Desert*, May, 1969.)

A little farther along the Randsburg Road, a turnoff to Trona, Ridgecrest and China Lake Naval Ordnance Test Station has a surprise in store for you. After meandering for a mile over the gentle landscape, it suddenly rounds a little hill and deposits you in Garlock. This minitown was once a thriving gold stamp mill center, where ore brought from the nearby Randsburg mines—among them the famous Yellow Aster—was processed.

Garlock's heyday was about 1895, and now all that's left for the visitor are the skeletons of a windmill, the local boarding house, the old arrastre, some deserted foundations. But for the discerning eye, this ghost town is a photographer's paradise. One such discerning eye belongs to *Desert Magazine* contributor Roberta Starry, writer-photographer who lives there with her husband Jack. They are the town's only registered voters.

No mention of the Cantil area is complete without a brief tribute to the famed Red Rock Canyon, now a State Park. Aptly named, the canyon takes center stage with its pink-red stone formations, which hundreds of years of erosion have molded into shapes that challenge the imagination. For decades it has been a favorite camping and hiking spot of Southern Californians, especially during the fall and winter months when the air is clear, the sky is blue, and soft white cloud puffs drift aimlessly by. (See *Desert*, January, 1970.)

The Old West is far from dead, and one of the places where it's liveliest is little Cantil. Stop by the post office sometime, say "hello" to that superb raconteur Martin Engel, and chances are pretty good that you'll eventually become one of those weekenders down on "The Jackrabbits." □

# The Magic



*Built between 1875 and 1890, the Basilica of the Immaculate Concepcion faces the central plaza and is one of Mexico's finest 19th-century architectural structures. Photos by the author.*



IF YOU are someone whose angling activity consists of pointing to the sand dabs in a supermarket and dicker-ing on the price, you might have fears of being out of place in what is called a fisherman's paradise. Forget your fears—you'll not see a single fisherman dragging his barracuda down the main street in Mazatlan!

You might see tourists fishing for bargains in the fascinating shops, or shopkeepers fishing for the tourist dollar! However, during our visit we did see a young boy wade into the surf and come out with a good-sized live fish he had caught with his hands!

Located on the Pacific Ocean, at the

entrance to the Gulf of California, Ma-zatlan is a place of unspoiled charm that happily blends the friendliness of Old Mexico with modern-day conven-ience. Miles of magnificent white sand beaches are bordered by a wide ocean-front avenue known as the Olas Altas Promenade. This is a favorite strolling area for the natives and tourists, especial-ly at the hour of twilight when the beau-tiful tropical sunsets "turn on" a romantic mood that lasts until the sun drops into the sea.

Toward the west, small islands rise majestically from the bottom of the sea, many to great heights, providing a setting of truly unique attractiveness. The high-

est natural lighthouse in the world, after Gibraltar, crowns the summit of Creston Island, 515 feet above sea level. Its beam is visible 60 miles at sea. The base of Creston Island is cavernous, and legend has it that many treasures hidden by the daring pirates of yore still lie somewhere in its numerous underwater chambers. Island and jungle excursions can be ar-ranged, and are popular here.

Mazatlan, in the state of Sinaloa, is a city of more than 60,000 people. The first dwellers of the area were the Toltecs and the Chichimecas, both of whom were said to have come from northern Ameri-ca. The Aztecs were residents here around the year 1064, and the Nahautl Indians



# *of Mazatlan*

by Jack Delaney



*Hotels and fine restaurants line the crescent-shaped beach (above) and the promenade with its tile sidewalks. One of the many beautiful homes (right) along the ocean-front as seen from an arana.*

lived here in 1800. In their language, the name Mazatlan meant "The Place of the Deer"—another version of its meaning is "Place Where the Deer-God Worshipped." Now, the natives proudly call their city the "Perla del Pacifico"—the Pearl of the Pacific.

Shrimp boats along the horizon, and other fishing boats in the ocean throughout the day, add to the beauty of the waterfront. The blue water that teases the sandy beaches deepens very gradually, so you may choose your favorite depth for swimming or wading fun. The city's

streets are all paved, and the sidewalks along the ocean boulevard are of varicolored tile, wide and clean. Even many of the narrow sidewalks in the main native section of town are surfaced with colorful tile.

Sportfishing here ranks among the best anywhere. Among the species which abound in Mazatlan waters are: tuna, braise, pompano, sailfish, swordfish, marlin, dolphin, barracuda, and shad. The season is year around, with the greatest activity from May to October. This is also an important hunting area—both for the sportsman who carries a gun and



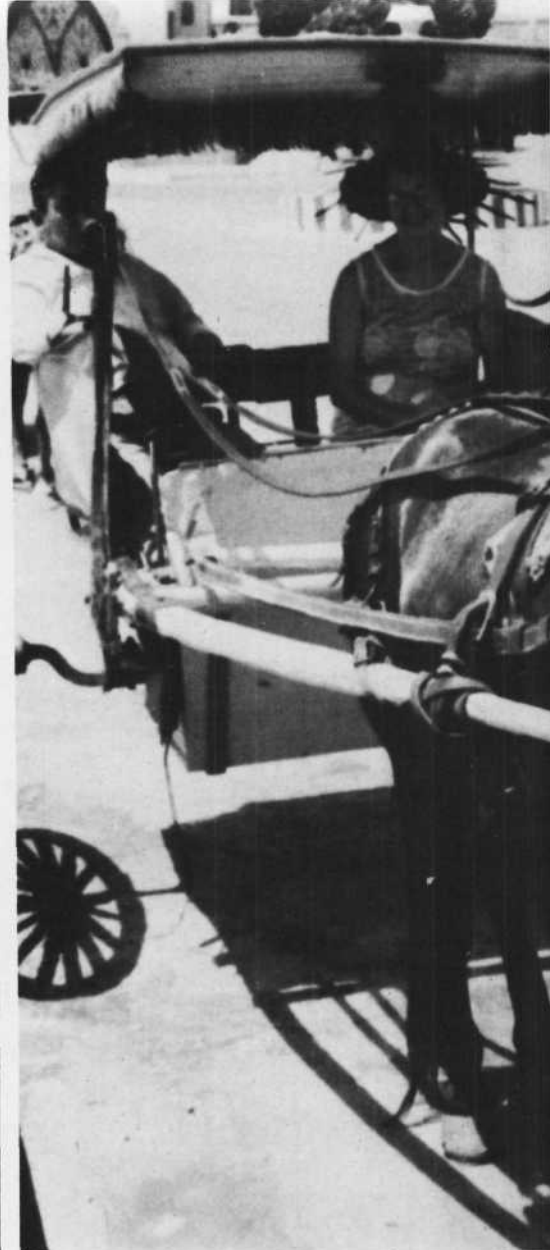
the modern adventurer who has discovered the satisfaction of obtaining wild life shots with a camera. Safaris can be arranged through Aviles Brothers, fishing and hunting advisors, in the dock area.

Outstanding among the city's many attractions are: El Fuerte, built on Ice-box Hill years ago as a defense against pirates; the Plaza of the Republic, with its ornate band stand; and the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, which was built between 1875 and 1890. This noteworthy Gothic style structure consists of a central and two lateral naves, separated by solid granite columns. Also of interest are the Mercado (Municipal Market), whose cast-iron facade dates back to 1895; and the Regional Institute of Fine Arts, where painting, theater, music, and dance classes are conducted.

Twice a week the La Paz Ferry, a super-elegant 250-foot motor ship with accommodations for 370 passengers and

114 automobiles, makes the trip from Mazatlan to La Paz, Baja California. It was built in Japan at a cost of 31½ million dollars. The trip consists of 17 hours each way with delightful cruising in deluxe air-conditioned surroundings. Features include comfortable staterooms, a restaurant, coffee shop, night club, swimming pool, and movies. One-way passenger fares vary from 50 pesos (\$4.00) for fourth-class aircraft type seats to 350 pesos (\$28.00) for a twin-bed stateroom with private bath.

For sightseeing and fun in Mazatlan, it is suggested that you have a ride in an arana. These popular horse-drawn two-wheeled vehicles weave through the automotive traffic and somehow come through without accident—though it is difficult to understand how they do it. Nobody gives nobody the right of way here! The arana drivers are old-timers who know everything worth knowing about the town. A one-hour ride in one of



these carriages costs only 20 pesos (\$1.60) for two people, and will give you the feeling of having peeked behind the scenes in this quaint community.

Our arana driver made several "picture stops" for us—usually in the middle of the street with traffic held up for two blocks! At one corner of Avenida Angel Flores and Aguiles Street we decided to walk back to the hotel and shop along

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*One of the best ways to see Mazatlan is riding in an arana. The drivers are expert guides and give you tips on where to shop and dine.*

and dresses. Many other attractive stores line the streets and you'll find that their prices are reasonable. Shopping in Mazatlan is a pleasant experience.

We stayed at La Siesta Hotel, which is clean, comfortable and charming. This three story hotel is built around a central court, with beautiful plants (especially bougainvillea) growing from the ground to the roof. Outdoor breakfasts and lunches are served at colorful umbrella tables. Our twin-bed room, with an ocean-front balcony, cost 150 pesos (\$12.00) per night for two. Other fine rooms, without ocean view, were 125 pesos (\$10.00) and 100 pesos (\$8.00). The atmosphere and service were wonderful. Each evening, while we were out for dinner, the maid came in and turned down our bed covers and fluffed our pillows for us!

Our choice of La Siesta was influenced by its desirable location—in the center of the fine shopping and dining area, facing the ocean, yet near the fascinating older section of town which is the heart of Mazatlan. About three miles to the north is La Playa Mazatlan, a busy, sump-

*Continued on page 38*

the way. This location was selected because these are the two principle shopping streets in the native section of Mazatlan. After dismissing our driver we strolled along the narrow street and observed many bargains before switching from window shopping to actual peso shopping. My first bargain was an excellent haircut in an open-front barbershop for 40 cents (U.S.)!

At Juan's Gift Shop, my wife bought a dress of unbleached muslin, machine embroidered in Agua Caliente, Mexico, for \$6.00 (U.S.), and a blouse trimmed with handmade lace, made in Mazatlan, for \$6.50 (U.S.). If they don't have your size, they'll make one to order within a few hours! At the Taxco Silver Shop, I bought a wallet made of unborn lamb for only \$2.80 (U.S.). This store features silver jewelry, gift items, serapes, ponchos, handmade lace capri suits, blouses

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# This is Your Desert

by Al Pearce

CAN YOU imagine an area with approximately 10 million people that has no laws, no controls and few regulations? Such imagination leads to a picture of chaos and destruction.

There is such an area: The California deserts. Here 10 million people live, play, seek wealth—and destroy the natural environment. Unfortunately, many millions of these people believe the desert is indestructible; that they can do whatever they like, whenever they like, and any way they like.

The results of this belief can be found throughout the California deserts. This seemingly vast land of sand, cacti, and heat has become pock-marked. This illusion has caused people—and their elected representatives—to play tick-tack-toe on this land for a hundred or more years.

The land is scarred with ever-increasing road and utility rights-of-way, pitted by past and present speculative mining operations, desecrated by substandard construction, littered with trash and debris, and plundered of its natural and scientific values.

As this plundering continues, it is becoming more and more evident the desert is not indestructible; that, indeed, it is extremely fragile. And, despite popular beliefs, the desert is not unlimited. Its resources are exhaustible. The struggle for existence is harsh, and the delicate balance between soil, plants, animals, water and air can be—and is—being damaged.

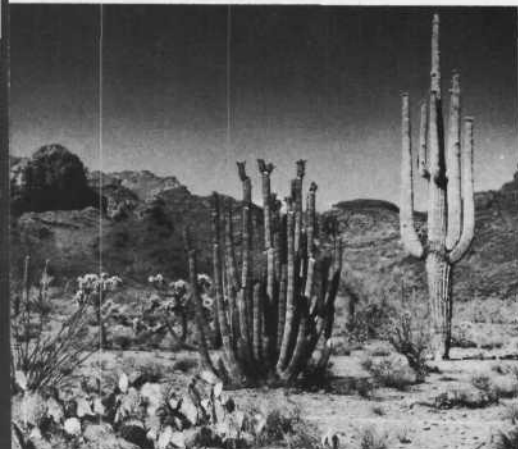
The Bureau of Land Management, which administers publicly-owned land, has recognized that the desert cannot survive the pressures of current unregulated demands. The Bureau launched a study to determine how best to preserve this vast area of natural and scientific beauty, and at the same time increase its recreational potential. The results of this study was released to the public in mid-1969. It was like touching off an atomic bomb in downtown Los Angeles.

The howls of protest were heard all

the way to Washington. The screaming protests came from nearly everyone, generated and magnified by several publications which could have done little more than scan the pages of the study and jump to their own conclusions.

Recommendations in the study would put an end to uncontrolled developments. It also would end the availability of cheap land through legal maneuvering and political chicanery.

The protests generated by some motorcycle and four-wheeler type magazines were unfounded. The study attributes a lot of the damage to the desert to this type of activity, but also recognizes the need for areas that would accommodate recreation of this sort. It does not advocate the banning of off-road vehicles. It simply recommends that these vehicles



For additional information on this article see Publisher's Poke, page 4.





# ... And So is This!

not be permitted to promiscuously abuse all of the desert.

Unfortunately, the government seems to lack the ability to simplify things. The nearly 400-page report is an example of this inability. One must read the entire report to understand what is really meant.

It does imply, for example, that motorcycle rallies, attracting hundreds of riders, destroys the desert. Several hundred pages later, it recommends that motorcycles be banned "only" from areas of scenic and scientific values. Elsewhere, it recommends that specific areas be set aside for this type of recreation.

While these two groups protested the loudest, they by no means were the only opponents to recommendations advanced by the Bureau of Land Management. Other protestors were those persons who

had been "using" the California deserts for years and had grown accustomed to a certain degree of freedom that it offered. The fact that this freedom, generated by lack of governmental control and an escape from the crowds, had been tumbling for years went unrecognized.

The minute the desert began to gain in popularity, this type of freedom began to fade. The old-timers, I believe, had already recognized this and were frustrated by a feeling of helplessness. The Bureau's report became their scapegoat, their whipping boy. It became an outlet for their frustrations.

I suppose I could be numbered among these protestors. I, too, object to governmental interference. I dislike vandalism, carelessness and thoughtlessness. Even greater is my dislike for the destruction of the things I have learned to love and appreciate.

After studying the Bureau's report, I began to realize the people who made the study and advanced the recommendations for control, believe and think as I do. Nearly every page of the report speaks of preserving those things that attracted most of us to the desert in the first place—and only those things.

Uncontrolled freedom, generated by exploration of a new, uncrowded land, is the only thing that will be lost. This is gone no matter what. The only thing

that can preserve this is a sudden change in habits that would keep everyone away from the desert. And this is not likely to happen. Therefore, it seems, the Bureau's way is the only way.

Unfortunately, the hue and cry and screams of protest that followed the release of the report has caused officials in Washington to view the Bureau's recommendations with a cautious eye.

It's unlikely that anything will be done about the Bureau's recommendations, at least not for another five years—unless, of course, the 10-million users of the California deserts take another look at the Bureau's report and storm Washington with demands that something be done immediately.

*Continued on page 32*

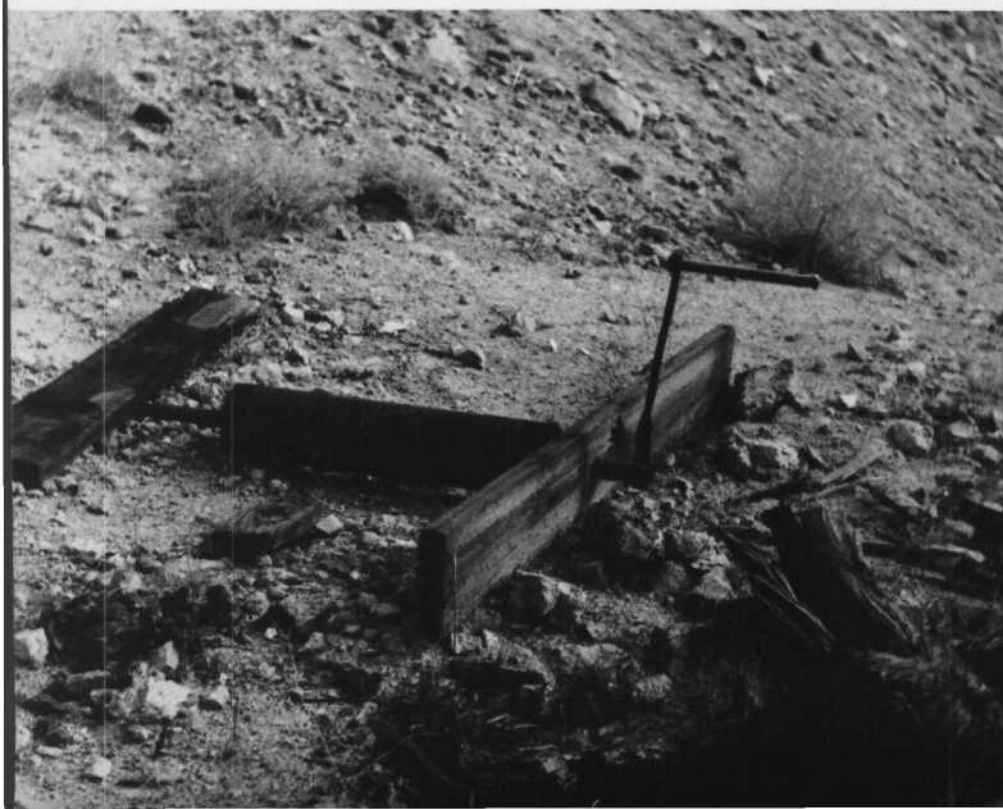


# Lost Mine in the Little San Bernardinos

by Jim Harper



*Still in good condition, this windlass was near abandoned mine.*



SOUTH OF the Joshua Tree National Monument in Southern California lies a desolate and forgotten piece of desert shunned by tourists who prefer to do their exploring from the seat of their automobiles. A low range of mountains run through the region where big horn sheep and ironwood trees struggle to eke out an existence.

Called the Little San Bernardino Mountains, the range of bleak wilderness is less than 30 miles east of Palm Springs, playground of movie stars, and further south, the famous Salton Sea. Except for an occasional adventurer in a jeep or on foot, this part of California is rarely seen by human eyes. Yet at one time it was the habitat of outlaws, cattle rustlers and wandering miners.

For many years I have wanted to explore the hundreds of rocky canyons and washes that divide it. Joining forces with





On two occasions Jim Harper nearly lost his life while searching for a lost mine in a desolate desert area of Southern California. Although he failed in two previous attempts, he is determined to continue his search. Photo of his jeep at an abandoned mine and other photos are by the author.

our efforts were worth the trouble. Noting the general location of the cabin on a map, we set out in the direction we supposed the mine to be and followed likely looking washes that could be navigated with our vehicle.

We had hardly started when a somber sky cast deep shadows over the trail we were planning to follow. The further into the canyon we drove, the darker it became. This should have been a warning to us, but we persisted in our search for a trail ignoring nature's warning. Gradually it was evident we were traveling over what had been an improved road at some period.

This only made us all the more anxious to find out where it went. A thick fog settled over the canyon and it became almost impossible to see what lay ahead. At one point we discovered a retaining wall shoring up part of the road. One of us had to get out and hike 10 feet ahead

a friend who lives in Indio, we made two expeditions into the Little San Bernardinos in search of a rich mine abandoned in the early 1930s that once produced large amounts of gold and copper.

My friend, Luke Gonzales, had hiked over most of the mountains during the last 20 years on weekends and vacation trips in search of forgotten claims and settlements and felt he had found just about everything worth looking at, but I had a surprise for him. During a recent flight over the area I had noticed an abandoned cabin nestled in a small canyon. It looked like the headquarters of a prosperous mine. Could this be the one we were looking for? From my descriptions, Luke was certain he had never been to this spot before.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature was against us. It took two trips to actually reach the cabin, but as it turned out all

*Evidently caught in a flash flood, Model T Ford was found in a wash.*



of the jeep picking out the road for the driver in order to make any progress at all.

The grades became steeper and harder to manage and the fog put a damper on our spirits. With the early arrival of nightfall we decided to turn back. It was a disappointment, but we resolved to follow the road to its end a short time later—in better weather. We had investigated a mining claim marker, but the papers were so tattered and brittle, we weren't able to read a single word.

A 1926 Model T Ford body half buried in a wash convinced us the mine we were looking for couldn't be too far away. As we continued to head toward civilization a light rain storm began to fall. In a short time, fed by the many washes and ravines on both sides of us, the water had gotten several inches deep.

We realized we could be in danger of being trapped in a desert gully washer and crushed beneath the weight of roaring water and boulders churned along by the current. Suddenly, above the sound of the storm we heard a solid roaring noise. In seconds an avalanche of boulders loosened by the rain crashed across the trail. If we had been a few feet further along, we would have been crushed.

As it was, the boulder now blocked our path. Urged on by the force of the storm breaking over our heads and the certain knowledge we could be drowned, we set to work with shovels moving the boulders. This is one time it paid to be prepared with proper tools. Gradually using the rushing water and the jeep, we moved the rocks far enough to escape the trap.

When we arrived back in Indio, we were cold and wet, but happy to be alive



with our jeep unharmed. But our curiosity was now aroused to a fever pitch. We were more determined than ever to follow the narrow road to its source. Several weeks passed before we found time in our busy schedules to attempt solving the mystery of our road.

As we drove this time, we kept our eyes open for faint trails that might lead to other mines, or possibly be the one we were seeking in case the road was impassable because of the storm. The big boulders that had caused us so much trouble the first time were gone, washed away by the force of the water.

The sunshine now made exploration fun. Landmarks and evidence of human inhabitants began to turn up with more regularity. At each bend we expected to see a cabin. It now seemed certain we had found the right access road.

The valley I had seen from the air suddenly loomed in front of us with the cabin shielded in the early morning shadows of the high canyon walls. The building seemed to be more elaborate and well constructed than is common to mining cabins. Inside was an old stove, bed, kitchen table and bench. For a few minutes we rested in the quiet stillness and wondered about the miners who once struggled here to earn a living.

No tailings were to be seen near the cabin, and even the usual dump was missing. Overhead, a rusted cable swayed in





*Almost inaccessible, even for four-wheel-drive vehicles, the abandoned mine discovered by the author and his friend, Luke Gonzalez, (below) long-time prospector, may yield clues to the mine they are actually seeking.*

the wind that gently brushed the ore bucket hanging from it. The cable seemed to indicate the mine was further up the slopes, nestled in the rocks.

Gathering up equipment, we hiked up the canyon wall to investigate. About 150 feet above the cabin site, the ground leveled off and we could see a mine dump. Red stained quartz was strewn over the dump. This led us to believe the miners were after gold. Since no evidence of copper was apparent, we had to conclude this wasn't the lost mine we had hoped to find.

Discovering a tunnel entrance, I wandered into it. The shaft turned to my left, then twisted to the right. With the dim rays of my flashlight, I noticed a ladder leading upwards. After climbing a few feet, I could see the earth above me had caved in. It appeared to be dangerous to stay there any longer so I quickly climbed back down the ladder. As I did so, the ground felt spongy under my feet. Looking down I discovered rotted boards covering a shaft of uncertain depth. For the second time in a few weeks I had come close to death. The old timber was barely able to hold my weight—otherwise I might have fallen through to certain death.

After my experience I vowed to always take a metal probe with me to test the ground ahead in mine tunnels and make sure I carried two flashlights—just

in case. Luke and I explored several entrances to the mine and came to the conclusion the mine was cut in the form of a chimney. This method is used when rich ore is encountered.

A rich strike would probably account for the small amount of equipment we discovered at the mine site. The ore was probably hauled out on trucks to Indio where it could be shipped to a smelter. Higher up on the hills we found a trail and started to hike toward the top of the canyon above us. As we climbed, I spotted what seemed to be a goat with straight horns silhouetted against the skyline.

Later we saw a majestic eagle soaring over the canyon looking for a meal. Tiring of the climb, we returned to the cabin and looked for relics. A small well with a 1937 date stamped on it caught my eye. Digging in it I found a cast iron waffle iron with the date 1908 embossed on it. We had spent a day at the cabin and enjoyed the trip, feeling our explorations had at least satisfied most of our curiosity.

A light rain started to fall again and so we headed toward Indio. Our lonely cabin in the Little San Bernardino Mountains will be the jumping off place for our next survey of the area as we continue to seek the lost mine which led to the discovery of this mine.

For the second time in less than two months we were returning from a lost mine trip soaking wet and cold. The next time we plan to hunt a mine, we will bring an umbrella we promised each other.

Some day, probably when we least expect it, we may stumble upon the lost mine. Until then all we can do is dream and chase down new leads. That's what makes this hobby so exciting—discovering the unexpected. □

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*Ocotillo and other desert plants are  
beginning to bloom in the  
Anza-Borrego area of California's  
Imperial County as seen in this  
photograph by Robert F. Campbell,  
Concord, California.*







# San Felipe Hills

by Walter Ford

**T**HE SAN Felipe Hills in Southern California present little color, except perhaps in the glow of a sunset. They contain no wood or water to ease camping chores. Yet desert travelers are finding a haven where they may relax and cast off the tensions resulting from the stresses of urban living.

Less than four miles from main highways the area has an atmosphere of remoteness far from civilized throngs. And, as if to compensate for its lack of beauty, Nature has provided a few oddities of her own.

Within recent years some map-makers have identified a range of hills lying between Grapevine Canyon and Scissors Crossing-Warner Springs Road in the Anza-Borrego area as San Felipe Hills, but to most old-time desert men the San Felipe Hills was the area about which

this article is written. Dr. Horace Parker, in his well documented *Anza-Borrego Desert Guide Book*, locates the San Felipe Hills in the same area.

The road to San Felipe Hills leads northward off State 78 in San Diego County at Ocotillo Wells, winds around Benson Dry Lake and enters San Felipe Creek. If you are tempted to cut directly across the dry lake bed, control that impulse. The lake bed serves as a landing field for planes and it's unlawful to drive a car on it other than around the edge. Owing to the activity of dune buggies in the area, the point for entering San Felipe Creek may vary from week to week. After you enter the creek bed, watch for a road that extends northward a few hundred feet downstream from a large tree on the north side.

With a length of around 60 miles, San

Felipe Creek may be the longest dry wash on the Colorado Desert. Some early map makers called it "San Felipe River," but its flow was never enough to justify that distinction. However, it gained historical recognition when its impounded waters at San Sebastian Marsh served to revive Anza's followers and livestock after their near waterless trek from Yuma in 1775.

San Felipe Creek also provided a locale for many of the lost gold legends of the adjacent desert. One of the often repeated tales concerned a Yaqui Indian who lived at Yaqui with his squaw. Yaqui Well is located near San Felipe Creek a short distance west of Tamarisk State Park campground. As the story goes, the Indian usually had a plentiful supply of gold. When it ran low he would disappear into the desert for a few days, then show up at some nearby habitation with more of the precious metal.



*The San Felipe Hills  
abound in fossil shells  
(left) from an ancient sea.  
Pickhead shows relative  
size of oyster shells.  
Gas dome craters (below)  
look like giant ant hills.  
All photos by the author.*

This was about the time when the search for the Pegleg gold was at its height and when an Indian with a poke full of gold wasn't likely to go unnoticed. Many attempts were made to track him down, but he always evaded his followers. After each trip to the desert he would usually emerge in a drunken orgy, one of which ended his activities. During an argument with a drinking companion he was stabbed to death.

A Yaqui squaw with a secret cache of gold is mentioned in some Pegleg mine legends and many devotees of lost mine lore believe she was the squaw of the Indian who lived at Yaqui Well. The late Henry Wilson, veteran searcher for the Pegleg bonanza, always maintained the source of the Yaqui Indian's gold and that of Pegleg's were the same, but he placed the location somewhere in the Borrego Badlands.

Squaw Peak, known as Black Butte to many old-timers, lies on the north side of San Felipe Creek about two miles west of the crossing for San Felipe Hills. The Squaw Peak area was once a favorite hunting ground for seekers of lost gold, but during recent years it seems to have attracted little attention. Henry Wilson told me that he rarely passed by when someone wasn't searching on or near the

mountain. On one occasion he found that someone had overturned practically every boulder on the south side of the mountain, but he never learned why or by whom it was done.

Some geologists say that the Squaw Peak area is the logical location for placer gold deposits in the Borrego region. They base their beliefs on the theory that in past ages there was an abyss adjacent to Squaw Peak into which storm waters of San Felipe Creek deposited gold bearing sands from nearby Volcan Mountains. In a later era the Volcan Mountain region included much of the Julian-Banner mining districts which are reported to have produced gold with a value of several million dollars.

Offhand it seems like the Squaw Peak area would be an ideal spot for a weekend prospector to test his luck with a gold pan or metal detector. However, in discussing the possible success of that venture with a geologist he told me that if the "abyss" theory is correct, any gold would be too far down in the sand to be recovered by ordinary means. It might be fun to give it a try anyway—you might uncover the source of the Yaqui's gold.

About four miles northeast of San Felipe Creek the road turns east toward San Felipe Hills and passes the debris of



an abandoned oil prospect known as the Wolfe Well. During the years between 1900 and about 1940 many oil companies drilled wells in the clay hills west of the Salton Sea with no apparent success. There were rumors from time-to-time that certain operators had brought in a producer and capped it for future use, but they remained nothing more than rumors.

At approximately three miles east of the Wolfe Well, a shallow valley runs parallel to the north side of the road. Along its edges you can see solid blocks of fossils which give evidence of the sea that once covered the region and the life



that flourished in its waters. Geologists say that during the Tertiary period of the geological time table—12 to 30 million years ago—the waters of the Gulf of Lower California covered most of the present Salton trough. The similarity of sea animals now found in the area as fossils with those found in the Gulf of Mexico have suggested to some observers that in ancient times there could have been an interchange of waters between that body and the Pacific Ocean, but no fur-

yond the fossil beds approximately four miles, where it passes under a power line and continues eastward. Leave the road one mile east of the power line and head southeast toward a clearing in the clay hills 0.8 miles from the road. While there is a slight slope to the clearing it makes a good camping spot when protection from wind is desirable. The route from the road is across a series of small washes which should present no difficulty. You will find many wheel tracks from which you may make a choice and follow them to your destination.

Two of the most fascinating attractions of San Felipe Hills are cone shape formations known as "gas domes" from which flow a form of methane gas. These are located on a ridge a few hundred feet south of the clearing. Although the gas is flammable, normally in dry weather it does not flow in sufficient volume to ignite when a lighted match is held near it. During winter months rain water settles deep down in the crater to form a thin mud. This blocks the flow of gas until enough pressure builds up to permit it to escape. Those intervals are indicated by bubbles arising from the surface of the mud, at which time the gas will ignite with a loud "pop" when a flame is brought near it.

South of the gas domes the terrain con-

tains a number of gulleys and depressions which, after a steady rainfall, change the landscape into a region of miniature lakes. The lakes evaporate after two or three days, but it is a pleasant change from a usually arid land while they last.

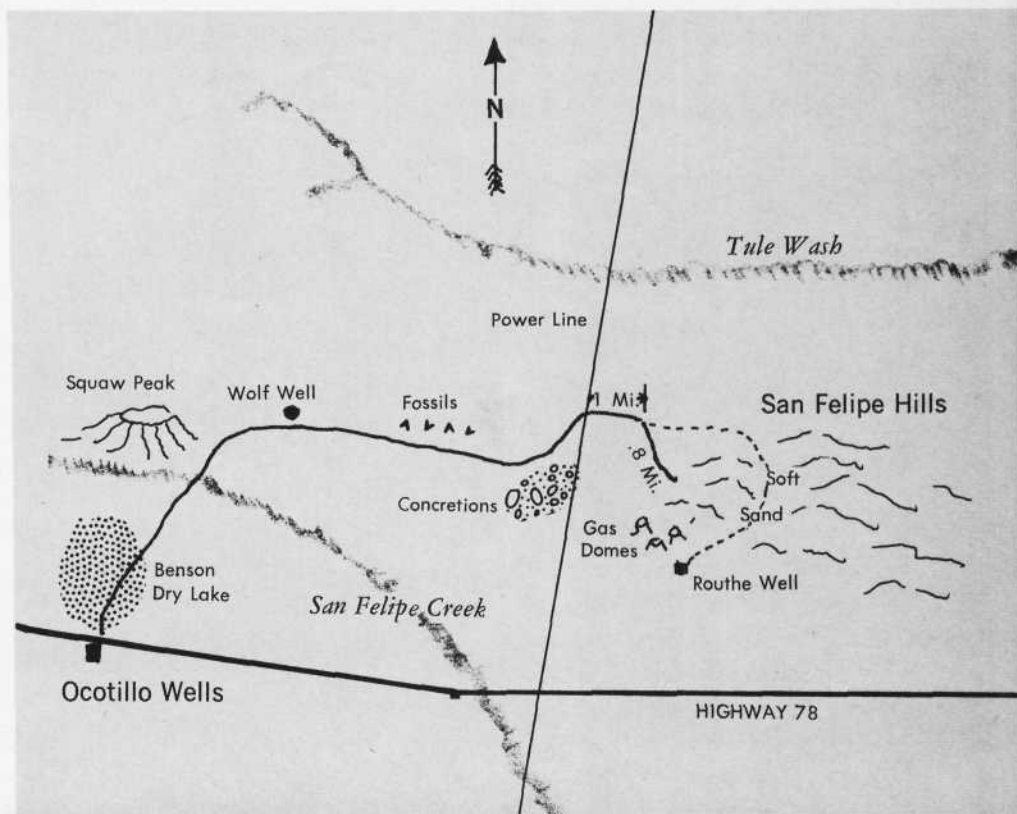
About one mile southeast of the gas domes a large pipe from which a stream of mineralized hot water flows when a valve is opened marks the location of the Routhe Oil Well. Back in 1919, former U.S. District Judge C. A. Routhe made an unsuccessful attempt to find oil here under very adverse conditions. The sandy terrain around the area made delivery of supplies and equipment extremely difficult. The only water available for the boilers was saline and brackish and located in Tule Wash, about three miles north of the well. Sections of the old pipeline may still be seen in the area. The well was abandoned at a depth of 3600 feet.

Whenever I visit the San Felipe Hills I think back to the time when the late Ed Ainsworth, of the *Los Angeles Times*, toured the region with me and of the closing lines of his column describing the trip: "You can gaze off at the distant Fish, Squaw and Superstition Mountains and wonder, as you listen to the stillness, how long before the subdivisions get here." As yet the subdivisions have not begun their march. □

ther evidence has been uncovered to support that conjecture.

Many of the early Spanish navigators in the Gulf of Lower California believed that to the north lay short-cut water routes to Asia and the Atlantic Ocean and it was their secret hope to discover the new passages and earn the lasting praise of their king. In 1540, Harlando de Alarcon and followers in three small boats traveled for some distance up the Colorado River. Although he failed to find any new sea routes, he gained the distinction of being the first white man to navigate that river.

The road to San Felipe Hills goes be-



**P**ILLAR OF desert wildlife, the tortoise trudges about his business. What to him are the desert's blast-furnace heat, its killing cold, its parched dryness, its meager grocery supply? So well adapted to his harsh homeland is this solid old character, he survives year after year and reaches a venerable age.

The desert tortoise leads a double life: part of each year he is on the scene; part, completely out of circulation. Both periods contribute to his success, but neither would be possible without the efficient coordination of body adaptations and his own particular behavioral traits.

Just being a turtle is a lucky start. Encased in the clan's armor, he is provided with a first-class means of combating one of the desert's greatest hazards; body water loss.

His shell is a construction wonder. Developed through some 200 million years, it is actually a bony box with with a top, bottom and connecting sides, open at both ends. Some fifty bones, fused together for strength, make up the curved roof; the flat belly slab also has nine fused bones. Inside, the vertebrae and rib tops are solidly bound to the shell; and for still greater support, the shoulder and hip girdles of the skeleton are modified to lie inside the encircling ribs.

Over the entire surface of his shell is a tough covering of horny scales. Each of these scales develops separately, growing from underneath. As the new layer forms, it pushes the old scale upwards, piling them up into rings, which makes the handsome tortoise pattern. Counting the rings won't give the reptile's age, however, for the top scales often break off or are worn smooth by the desert's sand-blasting. Turtle growth is slow. It takes at least 25 years for one to reach 13 inches in length.

Unlike his ancient ancestors, today's tortoise can pull his head, tail and legs inside away from the drying atmosphere. But when these appendages are outside and working, their covering of hard scales aids greatly in conserving body moisture. Further, as Schmidt-Nielsen and Bentley found in their recent study, the desert tortoise is so highly adapted to his parched environment he actually loses only 1/5 as much water through his skin and in breathing as do his cousins who live in forests; and only about 1/2 as much as his water-going relatives, the pond turtles. Water conservation is furthered by the kidney wastes being in the form of semi-solid uric acid which can be suspended in bladder water and retained in the body for long periods without becoming toxic as does urea.

His shell also provides first-class protection against predators. Its oval shape is hard for canine teeth, and, when all appendages are tucked inside, there is nothing loose to get hold of. But life on the desert is not without damage to his heavy armor. The tortoise has a 10- to 100-acre home range, and does quite a bit of moving around. With his low metabolism, he naturally adheres to the turtle rules against hustling. But if the temperature is right (warm enough for activity, but not too hot) and he feels like it, he can make up to seven miles per hour. He is also a very good climber, hieing up and down steep gravel banks in search of food or to reach den sites. Sometimes he slips, and goes bumping down along with an avalanche of sliding gravel and rocks. Resigned,

# The TENACIOUS



he merely pulls in his appendages and rides it out until he comes to a stop. In this rough and tumble, scales are knocked off and perhaps the bone underneath injured. Fortunately, the tortoise's repair department is exceptionally good, for broken and damaged bone is replaced in time, with new neat scales on top.

Landing on his back, however, is a different matter and one which has to be corrected at once. Not only is he more vulnerable to attack upside down, but he is also in real trouble with his breathing. His lungs, attached to his upper shell are now at the bottom of a heavy pile of intestines and other inside machinery, whose weight interferes with lung operation. Rocking back and forth and waving his legs, he finally makes foot contact with the ground and using his shell as a lever, flips himself right side up.



# TORTOISE

by K. L. Boynton

© 1970



The food choice of the tortoise has a great deal to do with his desert success. He is a vegetarian and able to eat a wide variety of plants. He has no teeth, but his mouth edges are hard and notched, jaws strong with good biting action, and his digestive department is geared to handle large quantities of material.

He prefers green vegetation and in the early spring dines on grass and flower heads, and succulent leaves low enough for him to reach. But, there is not more than about 40 days in the spring when the desert blooms and is truly green, and about this time vast sheep herds begin arriving and mowing down everything in sight, leaving only mesquite grass grown up in bushes and hence hard to get. So actually the tortoise is short-changed on the scarce green food that is available.

However, this vegetation, besides providing daily food, is a source of metabolic water that tides the animal over the hot dry periods. Additionally, its carbohydrates are converted into fat and stored in the tortoise's body; and this is what sustains him during the long winter months when he is hibernating. The tortoise makes the most of water delivered by thunderstorms and tanks up whenever he has a chance. One old number, offered water, increased his weight 40% in a single drink.

Zoologists Woodbury and Hardy found the tortoise's real ace in survival is his remarkable digging ability. It literally saves his life summer and winter.

For hot weather use, he digs several holes slanting down at an angle about three to four feet deep. These are located here and there in his stamping ground, usually in flat sand or gravel areas. The soil at the bottom of these holes is cool and even a little moist. When the midsummer's day heat becomes too much for even sitting in the shade of a sagebrush, he trudges down into one of these holes and spends the hot hours in comfort, his own breath adding moisture to the air about him.

The tortoise is quite a digging machine and earth mover. Forward thrust, strength and leverage are furnished by his rigid shell with its skeletal reinforcements. The actual excavating is done by his forefeet with their stout nails, powered by his great muscular forearms. Working deliberately and with sure strokes, the tortoise claws the hard sand and gravel loose. Then, with a slow but mighty swing of his arm, he sweeps the dirt aside. When the pile begins to get in his way, he turns around, and shoving along with his sturdy hind legs, pushes the dirt out of the hole ahead of him, using the forward part of his shell as a scoop shovel.

The winter den is much more elaborate. Dug into the bank of a gravel wash, it is really a long tunnel running back perhaps 30 feet. Its 16-inch entrance is half moon in shape and it remains open, permitting the circulation of air. Deep within, the temperature remains stable, particularly at the far end, and here it is that other tortoises congregate.

Although the tortoise runs his own affairs during his active season, occupying his summer dens by himself, he likes comrades around during his long winter sleep. Denning up for hibernation is probably the highlight on his social calendar.

The trek to winter dens starts in late October in the Utah-Arizona-Nevada part of the range. Waddling in from all directions, with necks outstretched and heads nodding if they meet, tortoises scramble up the gravel banks and into the dens. Zoologist Woodbury found 17 assorted sizes slumbering away in a pile in one den. The dens are used year after year, but the personnel is not always the same, as there is a tendency to shift around, spending a winter in this one, selecting another nearby next year.

Hibernating tortoises have additional company, namely self-invited den mates of other species. There are packrats, with all their possessions, which provide hiding places for various beetles and their larvae, spiders, silverfish, cockroaches. Present also are hibernating banded geckos and scaly lizards, sleeping spotted night snakes, a few sidewinders, a spotted skunk or two and various species of mice—not to mention

hordes of fleas. Ticks also live off the turtles, usually fastened to the softer skin around their necks. It's probably a happy day for the tortoises come spring when it's time to wake up and push out past the assorted rubble and rabble.

One of the major reasons for the success of the desert tortoise is the clan never got stuck with parental-care routine, thereby saving themselves wear, tear, worry and most important of all—time. Under the tortoise system, the business of mating and egg-laying takes only a few hours a year. The matter thus disposed of, the tortoises are free to devote their time and energy to surviving under some of the world's toughest conditions.

June to September is the courting season, if it can be called that, since no big hoopla is made of it. Indeed, courtship is sometimes a very discouraging affair. The gentleman's idea of wooing is to circle around nipping at the lady's shell edge. She is quite apt to ignore him entirely, continuing to eat stolidly or even doze off. Or, if completely bored with his half-hearted persistence, she may pull in her head, legs and tail, and folding her big forefeet across the front opening, literally close the door in his face.

In happier circumstances, actual mating is accomplished in little time, and eventually the female gets around to laying

eggs. Selecting a spot of wind-blown loose sand, she kicks out a shallow hole about three to four inches deep with a hind foot. She deposits three to seven eggs, pats them together, and shoves the sand back over with more hind foot action. Her chores done, she plods off. The offspring are on their own from this moment on.

The sun and hot sand do the incubating, and it usually takes about three months for the job. Then, there's a stirring under the sand as each hatchling, using his built-in can opener (a temporary spur at the end of his snout) cracks open his egg prison and clambers out. Digging their way up through the loose sand with their needle-sharp claws, they're out at last.

About the size of a fifty cent piece at this stage—their shells still soft and distorted from being cramped in the egg—each shoves off promptly on his own. Small and vulnerable, they are protectively colored, their light brown shells blending nicely with the desert hues. It's a big world, but they're tough, and well equipped by inheritance to make their way. What with being fully protected by law now, the odds are still more in their favor for a long life as good solid desert citizens, and members of that august body—the Tortoise Wintertime Snoozing Society. □



*"Now that animal-critter just don't make any dog-sense." Photo by Dick Freeman.*



# Desert Gardening

by Eric Johnson

**C**ONTINUE WEED control projects in graveled areas as well as in flower and shrub areas. New weed killers do the job easily and safely. Ask your nurseryman for the right kind of weed killer to use. With new growth of Bermuda grass emerging after several months of dormancy, you can begin spraying on new growth in unwanted areas.

Reduce the hazard of wind damage to large trees by cleaning out the dense growth found inside the Aleppo pine, Italian stone pine, evergreen elm, mulberry, Chinese elm, orchid tree, and jacaranda. Spring winds in all desert areas produce enough velocity to be damaging if trees are overloaded with excessive growth. Check all tree stakes and ties and secure where necessary or replace with new material. The new plastic ties generally provide a strong and secure connection between supporting stake and tree stem. Their flexibility also reduces the problem of stem cutting that so often develops when wire or rope are used.

Many native desert plants are readily available growing in containers and can be obtained from native plant nurseries located in Palm Springs, Riverside, and in Tucson and Phoenix. Plant as early in the spring months as you can or in the fall months. In most cases when you handle cacti such as saguaro, cereus, and others of similar growth habit you will have better results if you mark the west side and always replant in your garden with the west side to the sun. Keep natives on the dry side, always provide adequate drainage.

Continue to plant summer flowering annuals such as marigolds, zinnias, and Madagascar periwinkle in flower beds where winter annuals begin to decline. Calendulas and African daisy are usually the first to go out as weather moves out of the range of spring. Color plantings

in containers that include marguerites, petunias, lobelia, and other winter annuals will often keep flowering if moved into a shady location during this transition month.

Begin adding mulches in the basins of shrubs and trees to protect upper crust from drying as increasing temperatures take over for the summer months. Mulches applied in flower beds also aids in moisture retention. Adding a mulch means covering the soil with a layer of organic type materials to prevent soil crusting, improve soil structure, reduce cultivating and watering, and to lower soil temperatures.

There can be as much as eight to ten degrees difference in soil temperatures in mulched areas compared to soil without a mulch. Azaleas, camellias, gardenias,



citrus, and roses benefit especially with mulch applications. Ground bark, composted redwood sawdust, compost, and in windy areas, gravel in assorted sizes. Gravel is merely a cover, does not improve the soil structure.

Fertilize roses with a rose fertilizer if they are in bloom at any period this month. This will accelerate the bloom cycle for next month. Bermuda grass lawns will perk up with a high nitrogen fertilizer application. Dichondra lawns generally develop better growth with an organic type of fertilizer. Citrus trees will respond to an application of citrus fertilizer. Fall planted annuals can be kept going a little longer by cutting out dead material and applying a balanced pelletized fertilizer.

In all cases adequate watering must go hand in hand with fertilizer applications for protection from burning as well as to accelerate the action of the material. □

## Calendar of Western Events

*This column is a public service and there is no charge for listing your event or meeting—so take advantage of the space by sending in your announcement. However, we must receive the information at least two months prior to the event. Be certain to furnish complete details.*

**MARCH 29, EASTER SUNRISE SERVICES.** Red Rock Canyon, 25 miles northeast of Mojave, Calif. Services at 5:45 A.M. Ample room for campers, trailers, etc.

**APRIL 4 & 5, FIESTA OF GEMS AND MINERALS** sponsored by Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society, Community Center, Oxnard, Calif. Free admission. Write P. O. Box 246, Oxnard, Calif. 93030.

**APRIL 11 & 12, FIESTA OF GEMS** sponsored by Baldwin Park Mineral and Lapidary Club, Morgan Park, Baldwin, Calif. Write P. O. Box 96, Baldwin Park, California.

**APRIL 11 & 12, GEM AND MINERAL SHOW** sponsored by South Bay Lapidary and Mineral Society, Torrance Recreation Center, Torrance, Calif. Write Jim Montgomery, 22402 Redbeam Ave., Torrance, Calif. 90505.

**APRIL 11 & 12, ROCKHOUNDS DREAM SHOW** sponsored by the Palomar Gem and Mineral Club, Elk's Club Building, Escondido, Calif. Admission and parking free. Write P. O. Box 1583, Escondido, Calif. 92025.

**APRIL 18 & 19, CIRCUS OF GEMS SHOW** sponsored by the Kern County Mineral Society, Building 3, Kern County Fairgrounds, Bakersfield, Calif. Free trailer parking. Write Stan Masters, 3901 Erin Ct., Bakersfield, Calif. 93309.

**APRIL 18 & 19, NATURE'S JEWEL BOX SHOW** sponsored by the San Jose Lapidary Society, Westgate Shopping Center, Saratoga Avenue, San Jose, Calif. No admission charge. Write P. O. Box 1226, Santa Cruz, Calif.

**APRIL 18 & 19, CANYON CITY LAPIDARY SOCIETY'S SHOW**, Machinist's Union Hall, 521 Virginia Ave., Azusa, Calif. Write P. O. Box 372, Azusa, Calif.

**APRIL 18 & 19, ANNUAL GEM & MINERAL SHOW** sponsored by the Convair Recreation Association Rockhound Club, 9115 Kearney Mesa Blvd., San Diego, Calif. Free admission and overnight parking. Write Jim Sugg, 6823 Alamo Way, San Diego, Calif. 92115.

**APRIL 18 & 19, ANNUAL RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY FLOWER SHOW**, Municipal Auditorium, 7th & Lemon Streets, Riverside, Calif. Admission, \$1.00, children under 12 free. Tours of famous gardens included.

# FROM COLLECTING TO CREATING

by Dorothy Robertson

WHEN THERE are fascinating places to go to and intriguing stones to find, it's all adventure and fun. But when you go a step farther and discover an entire new hobby, then you've really got something!

Like my friend Mildred deHarrold. A few years ago Mildred and her husband, Ray, discovered the fun of camping out in the desert. They were interested in the "pretty" rocks they picked up here and there, but knew nothing about them. Then they joined a rock club and started going on weekend field trips.

One step led to another and before long the deHarrolds had enrolled for a course in creative jewelry making. After that there was no stopping Mildred. She did custom-designing and imaginative jewelry pieces, executed first in copper, then silver and gold. She branched out

*Searching for turquoise and other gem stones is hard work, but the end result is well worth the effort as shown on opposite page.*





into "antiquing" her one-of-a-kind jewelry. She also learned to cut and grind and shape and polish some of her more beautiful stones, and these she set into rings, pendants, pins and men's jewelry in the form of bolas and tie-tacs.

Mildred discovered what most rock-hounds know; there is a compulsion to work and shape and polish your stones to see what treasures you have found on your field trip. And where do you find these "treasures?"

Scattered across the face of the desert are old mines, places where the dumps or tailings still yield good stones, and many "fields" where one may pick up such stones as jasper, jasp-agate, bloodstone, chalcedony, agates, moonstones, jade, turquoise, colorful copper specimens, petrified wood, amethyst, gem-grade obsidians, fire-agate and opals.

So how about going on a field trip with us for turquoise to the old Toltec Mine? There you may find the gorgeous robin's-egg blue turquoise. We start from Baker, on U.S. 15, and head east for approximately 11-8/10 miles to Halloran Springs Road. We take the off-ramp by a Standard Oil gas station, turning north on the Halloran Springs road, and proceed into the hills up a graded road for approximately 5-4/10 miles to a junction.

We continue along the same road which turns due west past an old talc mine. Approximately one mile from this road-turn there is an old Auto Club sign—if vandals have not destroyed it! Another two miles brings us to an old tin shack where we find a good camping area. From this point on it is a steep three-quarters-mile hike up the trail to the old Toltec Mine.

These mountains are called the Turquoise Range and turquoise veinlets occur within the granitic rocks of the hills. Once this region was the site of mining activities. Petroglyphs may be seen in the canyon near the mine.

The Toltec Mining Company operated here for approximately five years, from the late 1890s until 1903. When the larger turquoise veins pinched out, operations ceased.

Do NOT attempt to enter the mine pit or its tunnels. All are in an extremely dangerous state of decay. You would have far more luck by working the dumps using a wire screen with a quarter-inch mesh which will catch the smaller bits of turquoise. A shovel and screen is all that is necessary—plus a pair of sharp eyes!

Robin's-egg blue turquoise is considered gem material so even tiny pieces

should be saved. For mosaic art they are perfect. Larger pieces can be used for cabochons, or perhaps as free-form stones. And if you become proud owners of a tumbling machine, think of the lustrous polish your tumbled turquoise will acquire.

Once you've begun collecting, you'll want to see what's inside some of your larger pieces of loot, for often the inner cores of scruffy-looking specimens yield outstanding stones. Suppose you've found a stone showing tantalizing bits of clear agate or chalcedony? There's a chance the inner core could be absolutely beautiful after you've ground away the matrix. You might even discover you've found a piece of sagenite—that gorgeous clear agate with inclusions of moss-like or ferny forms!

After you've polished your beauties comes the next step. If you haven't learned jewelry-making, your best bet is to simply buy what the trade calls "findings" — which are mountings or settings, available in silver or gold, or gold-filled. Rock shops carry these items, as do catalog houses. You can then mount your polished stones in these settings and thus complete the cycle of your hobbies — from collecting to polishing to creating — and discover an entire new horizon of adventure and fun. □



*Opal pendant and matching ring with turquoise in center were created by Mildred deHarrold from gem stones she collected on a field trip.*

## THIS IS YOUR DESERT . . .

*Continued from page 17*

The other alternative is complete chaos and destruction of the California deserts. If enough people demand it, the Bureau's dream can be realized. And a vast "playland" can be developed across California's deserts.

In the space that remains, this writer will attempt to condense two years and 400 pages of work down to a few paragraphs. Inevitably, some things will be left out, others may be confusing, depending on the individual's knowledge of the California deserts. If this happens, I can only apologize and ask that you withhold conclusions until you have all the answers.

The California deserts consist of roughly 16 million acres; approximately 11 million of these acres belong to the public, but this figure is rapidly dwindling. In 1968, about five million people played here. This does not include those who live and work here, or those who conduct business. These bring the total to about 10 million.

The five-million figure is expected to multiply at least 10 times by the year 2000. That's 50 million people playing where now only five million play. If next weekend, when you visit the desert, you look around, you'll realize what this means if you multiply everyone you see by ten. That's going to be one hell of a lot of people.

*Under the Bureau of Land Management plan competition vehicles such as the dune buggy below will have designated areas in which to compete and race. They will not be allowed to race in scenic areas where they might destroy the landscape.*



Look at the present litter; look at the bullet holes in signs, look at the tire tracks, the mine shafts, etc.; then ask yourself, "How are my children going to like this if I present it to them 10 times as bad as it is now?"

The Bureau's recommendations ask for 19 specific areas, totaling a little more than three million acres—less than one-third of the present publicly-owned California deserts. The remaining land would still be subject to abuse. By the year 2000—at the present rate—it will no longer be part of the public domain. If the Bureau's recommendations are quickly followed, the Bureau could then start laying a permanent claim to remaining public lands before it is gobbled up by investors.

Overly simplified, the Bureau simply wants to preserve this three-plus million acres. This is what the whole controversy amounts to: Preservation. Let me quote from the first page of the study:

"The ecologist knows that we depend upon the land—our soils, waters, our natural resources—for existence. The social scientist in recent years has learned that we depend upon the land for space as well. With our heritage, we as a people must have open land with clean water, clean air, some place to clear our minds of too much city and too many people. As a nation, we need—and are placing a greater and greater premium on—that which can probably best be called "room to roam!"

Now, what's wrong with this?

*The author and Editor Jack Pepper explore Gavilan Wash in California's Imperial County. Vehicles such as below, which are used for exploration and family recreation, will be allowed in most public lands of the back country providing they do not litter, deface or destroy the landscape.*







*Large group camping activities today are a common sight throughout the back country.*

areas that have definite "scientific, historic or natural values" that are currently threatened by misuse.

They are, here listed in the same line of priority as listed by the Bureau: Calico; Imperial Sand Hills; Mecca Hills; Red-rock Canyon; Rodman Mountains; Yuha Desert; Afton Canyon; Bighorn-Whitewater; Chuckwalla; Eastern Mohave; Grapevine Canyon; Picacho; Santa Rosa Mountains; Tufa (Trona) Pinnacles; Fort Piute; Kingston Peak; Old Woman Mountains; Turtle Mountains and Whipple Mountains. Each of these areas has one, more or all of the things most people wish to preserve. Many which are now being destroyed.

For example, a particular kind of Joshua tree grows only in the Cima Dome area, that is now being destroyed by vandals and careless and thoughtless people. The stones of Fort Piute are being carried away, one by one. Petroglyphs throughout all these areas are being defaced—often with obscenities.

This writer will concede that if handled by a government agency—any governmental agency—the results will probably be less than desirable; but in looking at the desert now and comparing it with what I first saw many, many years ago, I have no alternative but to admit that something must be done — soon. The Bureau has come up with the best answer I've seen thus far. □

The report continues: "The need for open space in American cities is receiving great attention today, as well it should. Park lands are important. But millions of Americans want, and probably need, something else, too—wide open spaces, way-out-yonder lands, where a man can stretch himself physically and spiritually from horizon to horizon. This is not an impossible dream."

The entire report is filled with this sort of rhetoric; suggesting that the Bureau's study team had a "feeling" for the desert and were not simply "government employees doing a high-sounding job" as some people have charged. To realize this dream, the Bureau would designate all possible uses within the three-plus million acres they are seeking to preserve.

There would be camp grounds here; motorcycle trails there; hiking trails elsewhere; scenic areas preserved; scientific and historic areas protected, etc.

The 19 areas of proposed development, preservation and protection would be linked by existing and new roads. Throughout this "system", there would be a number of "visitor centers" where the visitor could get information, directions and a lesson on the desert.

There would be numerous Bureau officers patrolling the areas to enforce necessary preservation and conservation regulations and to convince vandals and litterbugs that they had best seek recreation elsewhere.

The 19 areas considered by the Bureau's recommendations are confined to

*Competition events such as this one being held in the Imperial Valley sand dunes area are becoming increasingly popular. The B.L.M. does not plan to ban these events as some magazines have stated, but merely to restrict the events to designated areas.*

*These tracks on the sand dunes of Death Valley were not made by men and motorcycles. They were created by beetles crawling to their destinations. Areas such as this should be kept inviolate so all may enjoy the wonders of nature for generations to come.*



# Journey to Julian

by  
Richard A. Bloomquist

SAN DIEGO County recently celebrated two historic anniversaries. The city of San Diego marked its bicentennial as the first white settlement in California, while 60 miles to the northeast in the county's folded back country the gold town of Julian observed its centennial year.

San Diego's birthday is well documented, but the date of the original Julian gold strike—and its discoverer—are still matters of some controversy. It does seem clear, nonetheless, that the first traces of gold were found sometime during 1869. Additional discoveries were made in 1870, and a town soon began to blossom on the pine and oak-dappled hills, a town laid out by Drury Bailey and named in honor of his cousin, Mike Julian.

Over the past century Julian has fortunately retained much of the form and the spirit of the gold rush years. Many of its historic buildings still stand.

Near the corner of Main and A is the Bailey House, once the home of Julian's founder, while at Main and Washington Streets, Julian's principal intersection, are four old municipal structures: Coleman's Store, dating from the 1890s and now operated by Bob and Vikki Giro; Tozer's Drug Store, constructed in 1886 as the Marks Building (here Clayton Tozer dispenses sodas from one of the very few old-fashioned fountains remaining in the county); the Town Hall, raised in the early 1900s and site of the famed Wildflower Show each May; and Silvers Store (1908), now the shop of Henry Silvers, musician and electrician.

On Main Street near B stands the town's oldest commercial structure, Hatheway's Frontier Shop, built in the mid-1870s as the Wilcox Store. The nearby Mountain Market also dates from the '70s. Across the street, the building now housing Jack's Grocery goes back to the late 1880s, when it served as DeLuca's Store.

At Main and B you'll see the venerable Julian Hotel, built in 1887 and still in use. The first owners were Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, former Negro slaves, who planted some of the cypress, locust, and cedar trees which shade the property today. The Julian Hotel is the lone survivor of the town's numerous lodging houses. The Mountain View, the Hos-



*Dating from the 1870's, Hatheway's Frontier Shop is the oldest active commercial building in Julian. It is on the main street.*



kings House, and the Mountain Glen all succumbed to fire, while the Washington fell before the wrecker's bar in 1962. Opened on February 22, 1872, and named for the Washington Mine, which had been discovered two years earlier, the Washington Hotel was one of the community's oldest and most impressive landmarks, and its destruction was the entire town's loss. Another structure torn down in recent years was the abandoned Hoskings residence on Fourth Street, once one of Julian's showplaces.

Two former school buildings survive in Julian. The old Cuyamaca High School can be seen in back of the Mobil Station, and on Second Street between B and C stands the one-time Julian Elementary School, dating from the 1870s and now occupied by the Rasmussen Apartments. The present elementary and high schools are just east of town on Highway 78.

One of Julian's most attractive residences is the Blanc House at Third and C. With its long porches, red and white color scheme, and lush plantings, this simple, gracious home reflects much of what was best in Victorian architecture.

On a more negative note are the old jail at Fourth and C, with its barred windows and iron door; and the Julian cemetery on the crest of a little hill off A Street. The oldest marked headstones range back to the late 1800s.

Gold was the seed from which Julian sprang, and many abandoned mines punctuate the forested hillsides to the north of town, mines with names like High Peak, Washington, Eagle, New Owens, and Chieftain. The Eagle, beyond the end of C Street, is open to public tours, with tickets for sale at the Land Office on Main Street. East to the desert's edge at Banner and south to the Laguna and Cuyamaca Mountains, scores of other workings speckle the slopes and flats. The largest single producer in the entire mountain district was the Stonewall Mine, twelve miles south of Julian and now within Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Discovered in 1870, the Stonewall accounted for some \$2,000,000 in gold. Tailing piles, retaining walls, and rusting equipment mark the site today.

To learn more of Julian's early years visit the museum on Washington Street at Fourth. Open on weekends and holidays, this free museum also has maps for sale showing the location of the town's historic landmarks.

In the Mother Lode and in northern California there are many now-serene mining camps rich in scenic beauty. Yet in southern California, Julian is unique. In its setting, in the romance of its history, and in the fiber of its buildings the town possesses treasures which, hopefully, will continue to be cherished. □



Opened in 1887, the Julian Hotel is still going strong. It is surrounded by trees in San Diego County's scenic back country.

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# Catfish Love the Desert

by Don Roderick

**W**HAT FAMILY of freshwater fish has members who grow to a length of 13 feet and a weight of 400 pounds; other members who emit electric currents; still others who swim upside-down, and distant relatives who crawl overland in search of water? This is not a tricky riddle. The answer is one of Nature's most interesting families—the catfish!

The largest species is the Danube catfish which produces electricity to paralyze or kill its prey and is found in Africa; those who swim upside-down (not to keep the sun out of their eyes, but to feed along the surface of the water) are the Nile catfish, and the overland joggers are natives of tropical areas who seek water during dry seasons. More than 20 species of catfish are taken from the waters of North America. The largest are the Mississippi catfish which grow to a weight of 150 pounds!

According to the United States Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, catfish have now become the product of a new multi-million-dollar-a-year industry. Catfish farms are in operation, or being developed, in Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Louisiana, and elsewhere in the central and southern states.

Their brochure was evidently printed before Brawley, California entered the field of aquatic farming. This Imperial County community is now a participant in the freshwater industry of catfish raising.

The desert farm, Imperial Valley Enterprises, is located at the south end of Brawley. Drive State 86 to Keystone Road, about five miles south of the business district. At this point, easily identified by the huge Holly Sugar plant at the

corner, turn left and proceed about two miles east to the farm. It is on the right side of the road. All you'll see as you approach it is an adequate parking area, two rectangular holding vats, and about a mile of levee, behind which is the main operation.

You will be greeted by Edward Dailey, president and general manager, Robert Dailey, farm superintendent, or Larry Alvarez, fish culturist assistant, who will be happy to explain the project to you. Mr. Alvarez gave us the catfish version of the "birds and the bees" story. Their brood stock consists of 100 males and 200 females. Each male has two wives who produce about 12,000 eggs per sitting, for him to validate! The basic stock averaged four to five inches when placed into the ponds and now average eight to nine inches. At present, the catfish population here is more than a half-million.

When you climb up to the surface of the levee you will see what is said to be the largest catfish farm in the west. There are six major man-made ponds and six smaller ones. Each of the large ponds is 350 feet wide by three-quarters of a mile long, and is surrounded by a wide levee. Fish are brought from the ponds to the two large holding vats at the entrance to the farm when orders for their purchase are received. Here they are sorted, weighed, treated to insure good health, and prepared for shipment to various pay lakes.

Catfish farming is a scientific operation. Specific propagation and rearing techniques are followed at the Brawley plant, in order to assure a top-quality product. The water arrives via an offshoot of the All American Canal, goes through a filtering operation, and is di-





*The two large holding vats where catfish are sorted, weighed and treated prior to shipment. They are fed a balanced diet—including vitamins!*

rected into various ponds. The fish are fed every day with special pellets which are made in Arizona. This scientifically balanced food includes soybeans, fish meat meal, vitamins, minerals, and antibiotics. Every attention is given the fish, short of burping them!

Whether or not you visit the farm, you might be interested in having an attractive color booklet entitled, *Fancy Catfish*, offered by the government. It contains many recipes for cooking and serving catfish. To obtain a copy, write to the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., 20240. This brochure will give you a greater appreciation of these creatures that have flourished through millions of years.

It is claimed that farm-raised fish are better flavored and more succulent than the "free-lance" variety. Credit is given to the careful rearing techniques used, but here in the West there is another plus factor for these warm-water fish—sunshine. The progressive community of Brawley is an excellent location for a catfish enterprise. After all, its slogan is: "where it's sun-day every day!" □

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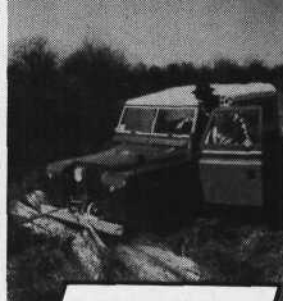
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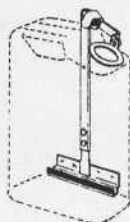
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## MAGIC OF MAZATLAN

*Continued from page 15*

tious resort slanted toward the tourist trade 100%. Swank surroundings and a beautiful private piece of the ocean make this what has been called the city's "finest" hotel. Its cabana-dotted beach is known as one of the world's loveliest. Along the waterfront boulevard are many luxury hotels and apartments for the vacationing visitor.

Even trailerites, mobile homers, and camperites will find attractive accommodations here, at reasonable prices. Most of the trailer parks are near, or north of, La Playa Mazatlan. Seaside, Cameron, Las Canoas, Cocos, Las Palmas, and Sábalo Beach trailer parks are all pleasant docking places for your home on wheels, and are all located near the beach. Rates at the modern Las Canoas start at \$2.00 per day, or \$40.00 per month, with a top rate of about \$2.50 per day, or \$50.00 per month for the front locations, facing the ocean. These rates are in U.S. money.

Eating is an adventure in Mazatlan, and the prices run from very low to moderate. At the Happy Rib Restaurant, near the Plaza, you can enjoy a full filet mignon dinner for 10 pesos (80 cents); the Belmar Hotel Restaurant offers delicious club sandwiches, with extras, for 12 pesos (96 cents); and at the plush La Playa, a light breakfast is 9.5 pesos (76 cents), a sandwich and coffee lunch is 10 pesos (80 cents) and a full steak dinner, from soup to dessert runs about 40 pesos (\$3.20).

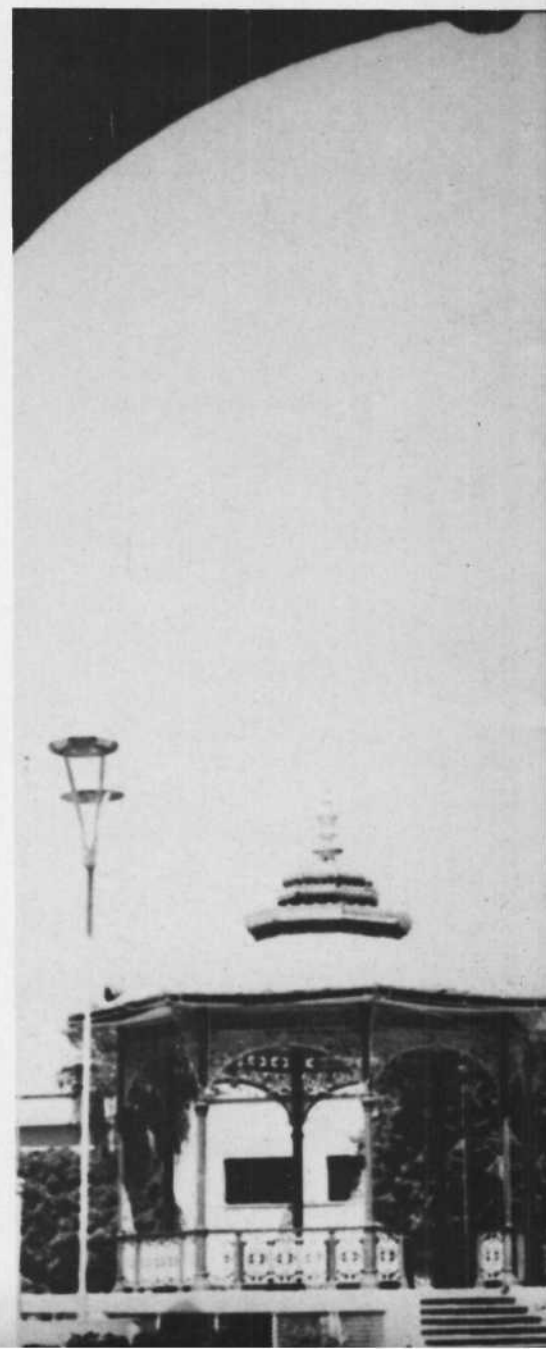
The Shrimp Bucket, in connection with La Siesta, is a famous restaurant featuring seafood and instant music! In addition to a 6-piece marimba band, we were entertained during dinner by a 5-piece singing orchestra, followed by a 10-piece Mariachi band and three young dancers in native costumes. This is a fun place—and prices are reasonable. We enjoyed a full dinner, from seafood cocktails to dessert, with Shrimp Toscana as the en-

tree. All of this was preceded by Margaritas and followed by Kahluas (on the house), and the cost for the whole evening was 78 pesos (\$6.24) for two!

La Copa de Leche is probably the finest restaurant in Mazatlan. This fabulous place (related to the famous restaurant in Guadalajara with the same name) is tremendous in size, decor, food quality, and hospitality. An exquisite dining room, featuring organ music; a large, beautiful lounge, with orchestra music for listening and dancing pleasure (augmented by floor shows on weekends); an attractive coffee shop; a large banquet room; and a quaint sidewalk cafe all blend into a grand restaurant complex.

Surprisingly, prices for an exceptional dining experience here are not out of

*The ornate bandstand  
in Mazatlan's  
Plaza de Republica is a  
popular meeting place for  
residents and visitors who  
enjoy strolling around  
the plaza.*





line. Our delicious dinner included Tenderloin Tips Mexican Style as the entree and Mangos in Cream as the dessert. It started with Margaritas (a *must* in Mexico) and terminated with Kahluas (a *must* by management generosity). The total price was only 82 pesos (\$6.56) for the two of us. Incidentally, the Copa has an original drink, exclusive with them, called a Conquistadore—you might want to try it.

In planning a trip to Mazatlan you may choose almost any method of travel you wish. We tried the train and enjoyed a restful, pleasant trip. The cost for two round trips, including Pullman compartment accommodations each way, was only \$128.00 (from Mexicali). Automobiles are parked (free) in a fenced, guarded

compound, near the station, and receipts are issued for them. Customs and Immigration officials check passengers in the railroad waiting room. If any question arises, the man to see is Senor Alberto Bazua of the Traffic Department, across the street from the station. We found him to be very courteous and helpful—in English!

If time is important, you can fly from Mexicali to Mazatlan in about two hours on the modern jet planes of Mexicana Airlines. Round trip fare for two is \$237.00. If time is no problem, you may "live it up" on one of the Princess Cruise Ships. Regular schedules from the Los Angeles area to Acapulco include a generous stop-over at Mazatlan.

Another method is to drive the approximate 1000 miles from Mexicali to Mazatlan, along Highway 2 to Santa Ana and Highway 15 the rest of the way. You'll have an opportunity to look in on a number of interesting cities en route, such as Sonoyta, Hermosillo, Guaymas, Ciudad Obregon, Navajoa, Los Mochis, and Culiacan. In each of these communities you'll find acceptable motels and restaurants.

All of these cities can be seen by still another method of travel—ride the bus and "leave the driving to them!" I was assured by Manager Gerry Strosburg and Helen Bowling of the Greyhound terminal at Indio that these Mexican buses are modern, with air-conditioning and restrooms. Several schedules from Mexicali are offered daily and all seats are reserved. Arrangements and reservations may be made at Greyhound terminals; and the rates will really startle you. Round trips for two, Mexicali to Mazatlan, cost only \$54.60!

Upon your arrival in Mazatlan, after dropping your luggage in your hotel room, stroll the Avenida Angel Flores (Street of the Angels Flowers) and see the real heart of the city. After dinner, return for an evening stroll and you'll be pleasantly impressed with the Mexican people who also stroll along the narrow sidewalks. You'll find them beautifully dressed—*especially the señoritas*. When you visit Mazatlan, be sure to rub elbows and exchange smiles with the Mexican people—after their siesta period. You'll probably experience the feeling that "home was never like this—but Heaven may be!"

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# Woman's Viewpoint



**H**AVE YOU ever looked at a blossom and wished it would stay that way forever? Maybe you wanted to capture and remember a tiny wild dog-tooth violet under some scrub oak, or a pinkish-yellow Peace rose from your garden. It can be done!

Flower blossoms can be preserved by packing them in an absorbent substance until they are dry. Early pioneers in this country preserved their few precious flowers with cornmeal. Some of their bouquets are in museums today. Later, women tried a sand and borax mixture to dry flowers.

Both methods work well but have disadvantages. Cornmeal is slow to absorb moisture, weevils can get in, and it is expensive when used in large quantities. Sand with its sharp edges can damage petals and the borax burns the blossoms if left on too long.

Would you believe a substance that dries flowers perfectly, is fast, never burns, and is absolutely free? It is the oolitic sand on the south shore of Great Salt Lake. I want to share this discovery with you now, because many of you readers may be near the vicinity of the lake on your summer vacation, and will want to get a bucket full of sand to preserve flowers.

Oolitic sand is different from ordinary sand. Under a microscope it looks like smooth shiny eggs. Ordinary sand has sharp angular corners. The oolitic sand is formed by the precipitation of lime from

water onto silt particles. The tide rolls the coated particles back and forth on the lake bottom until the edges are smooth. This smooth surface makes oolitic sand an excellent substance for preserving fragile blossoms.

Next winter you'll be glad you took time to preserve some of summer's splendor. If you not able to get oolitic sand, try another substance. In addition to the cornmeal and sand with borax, there is a commercial substance called silica-gel. Silica-gel works perfectly, but is expensive; a gallon costs about \$8.00.

To begin the drying procedure, first, prepare the packing substance. If oolitic or ordinary sand is used it should be washed at least three times in detergent, strained, and dried. After the sand is prepared it can be used over and over. With ordinary sand, mix about one part borax and one part sand. Use more borax if the sand is heavy and less if the sand is light weight. White cornmeal is best for the meal method. A small amount of borax can be added to the cornmeal to discourage weevils.

From this point the process is the same for all substances. Select a blossom that has just opened. Check to make certain the petals are completely dry and free from insects. Next, strip all foliage from the stem. If the stem is hollow and sturdy, insert a wire through the center and push into the blossom. Some stems are weak and will snap after they are dried. It is best to break these stems off before drying and insert a florist's green wire stem. As the flower dries it will shrink tightly around the wire. I usually put wire stems on all my blossoms because they are easier to work with in an arrangement.

Choose a container that is an inch taller than your flower. Milk, cereal, and ice cream cartons are a good size for most flowers, especially flowers with wire stems that can be coiled up. Long flowers, such as delphiniums can lay horizontally in a florist's box or in a similar long, narrow box. Full round blossoms such as peonies and hydrangeas need short, wide containers.

Now the flower is ready for the actual drying treatment. Put an inch of packing substance in the container. Coil the wire stem around your fingers and set the flower into the sand or meal. Natural stems can be anchored on the bottom of

the container with a pinch of clay.

Sprinkle sand or meal into the container, making sure it filters around each petal. Gently tap the container as you work to prevent air pockets. Cover the top of the blossom with about an inch of packing substance. Then put the container in a dry place for two to three weeks. When borax is used, it is important not to leave the blossoms in the container too long or the petals will burn.

Don't be shocked if some plants change colors during the drying process. Red often changes to black, purple to blue, and green flowers or foliage turns a muddy brown.

When it is time to uncover the blossoms carefully pour the packing substance off. If tiny particles cling to the petals remove them with a soft watercolor brush. Put a drop of glue in the center of the blossom to help keep the petals from falling off.

I have several favorite dried flower arrangements. One is a basket of yellow and orange marigolds for a family room. The marigolds are sturdy and colorful against the walnut paneled walls. Another choice bouquet is one of tiny yellow daisies and blue larkspur in a milk-glass dish on a Victorian dresser.

By describing the technique of preserving flowers, I hope you will be inspired to watch for blossoms this summer to use in dry flower arrangements. Isn't there a spot in your house where a bouquet of dried flowers would add the perfect touch?

Remember, next month's column is devoted to reader's favorite camp-out recipes. The Robison family is having a ball trying the tasty recipes you readers have sent in. Don't miss the May issue!

Reader suggestions:

Pussy willows can be dried and saved from year to year. Put the stems in a vase without water until they are dry, then store in a roll of newspaper. Mrs. J. A. Knudsen, S.L.C., Utah.

Apple, cherry, forsythia, and other flowering plants can be forced to bloom early by crushing the bottom few inches of the stem and immersing in water for about a week. Mrs. E. S., Palm Desert, Calif. □

*John A. Robison*



## Who's In Dutch? . . .

In your review of the *Dutch Oven Cookbook* by Don Holm in the February, 1970 issue you state: "Paul Revere not only warned the British were coming, he also designed the original Dutch Oven."

I refer you to the *Cast Iron Cookbook* by Callahan, a paperback containing excellent recipes and historical background. Callahan states: "One of the first iron works was started in Braintree, Massachusetts, but the supply of ore rapidly disappeared so another site was selected on the Saugus River . . . some of the molten iron was poured into molds to make skillets, pots, pans, caldrons, spiders and Dutch Ovens. The operations came to a halt in 1675 due to government restrictions and shortage of raw material."

Paul Revere was born in 1735—sixty years after the above operation. So let's put the craftsman, Paul Revere, in the saddle and your review in the pot with the lid on and say "the story is cooked." To keep from being in Dutch with you, I want to say the February issue was great!

MRS. WELLS SAGER,  
Tulsa Oklahoma.

*Editor's Note: The information on Paul Revere in my review came from the text of the Dutch Oven Cookbook. Having tried many of the excellent recipes from the book and found them authentic—and delightful to my taste buds—from a culinary standpoint, I still stick with Paul Revere and refuse to be put into a pot. Both Author Holm and Paul Revere and this reviewer will stick to our saddles until we are unseated with more positive proof.*

## Ironwood . . .

It was such a delight to read the article *Artistry in Ironwood* in the February, 1970 issue. I never knew so much could be done with ironwood and particularly by a woman. She must indeed be gifted. The photographs were exquisite and so life-like. Being a desert lover, your magazine offers me many pleasurable moments and I look forward to each issue. Keep up the good work.

TASHA WELLER,  
Los Angeles, California.

## World's Best . . .

This is to let you know that I feel the articles in your magazine on desert animal life by K. L. Boynton are nothing short of the world's best. If it should ever become necessary to discontinue them, I believe you would have a rough fight on your hands from all your readers.

As an indication of my enjoyment of all the other articles in your magazine, find enclosed a check in the amount of \$5.00 for a one year's subscription.

CHARLES T. MARTIN,  
Lancaster, Calif.

# Letters to the Editor

Letters requesting answers must include  
stamped self-addressed envelope.



## Snakes Alive . . .

One of your readers recently asked about snakes and how to tell good from bad. The main thing to remember is that rattlers are blunt at both ends and non-poisonous varieties are sharp. If you forget, bare your arm to the elbow and clench your fist. That is the way a rattler is built—a big head and rather lean body.

Keep in mind, too, that a rattler is no gentleman about warning you of his presence. I almost stepped on the last one I encountered about a year ago. It was lying quietly and ready for action in the shade of an oleander bush in my own back yard! What saved me was that I always look to see where I am stepping. I saw it move, whereupon I stood motionless while a neighbor brought over a shovel which was used to chop to pieces the deadly creature. It was about three feet long and had eight rattles.

The largest one I ever killed was six feet long and had a dozen rattles. But Dr. Clarence Smith, former curator of the Palm Springs Desert Museum, has informed me that a seven-footer was found and destroyed in a neglected date grove near Indio several years ago.

At about the same time I encountered the rattler in my back yard. I had an amusing experience with a harmless garter snake. I was mowing the lawn when I saw it wiggling across the patio. To keep it from getting hurt I took a broom to get it out of the way, but evidently I hurt its feelings and it wanted to fight, striking like a rattler at the broom. After playing with it for a while I swept it into a

patch of rose bushes and told it to behave itself.

It is surprising that so few die of snake bite. In my more than 50 years of living in or near the desert, I have not heard of more than four or five fatalities. One was a small child playing in its own yard who may have picked up the snake. Quite likely its life could have been saved had its mother known what had happened.

The late renowned Seldom Seen Slim wandered for years as a prospector in the deserts of California and Nevada without being molested by rattlers. When a city lady asked him why, he replied, "They aint nothin' to fear. All you do is never take a bath, eat nothin' but bacon, beans, and chawin' tobacker, an' drink bootleg likker an' them varmints'll steer clear of you."

LEE STROBEL,  
Glendale, California.

## Happy About Hummers . . .

I was most pleased with the article about "Hummers" in the February, 1970 issue.

I am also an ardent fan of Nature's brightest jewels. I keep six feeders going all year. I no longer boil my nectar, but use tap water that does not have the soft water treatment. By stirring in the sugar to this water and then coloring it, I have less mold gathering. Most of my feeders are the single tube variety and I fix a perch by twisting a light metal coat hanger at right angles.

During the winter season there are five little warblers wintering in our valley and they enjoy the fluid as much as the hummers. Part of the time the little Ruby-crowned kinglet is here. I keep only one feeder of the type you like as these others cannot get the food from them.

I use green ant powder and sprinkle it at the base of the trees and the poles to keep down the ants. Thank you again for your article.

MARIAN E. BRYANT,  
Blythe, California.

## Goofy Computer . . .

I have been a subscriber and eager reader of your magazine for a number of years and always look forward to the next issue. However, for the past four months, I have been receiving two copies of each issue. It isn't that I resent the two issues, for some of my friends thoroughly enjoy the extra copy, and no doubt will subscribe when the free copies cease. It seems to me, however, you can't afford to send two to me, and, if I am paying for them, I can't afford to continue. Please consult your computer; she must have goofed.

REVEREND M. WIERSIG,  
Garden Grove, Calif.

*Editor's Note: Not being a good and honest Christian like the Reverend Wiersig, our computer did goof. If other subscribers are getting two goofy issues, we would appreciate being informed.*

## Enough Said . . .

*Editor's Note: For obvious reasons the name of this reader who explained her change of address in a letter is being withheld.*

The occasion for the name and address change was brought about by a divorce action, and I won custody of the subscription to Desert Magazine. I guess there has to be something funny in the whole mess—and this is it.





# Good grief! Does this mean Snoopy's given up flying?

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